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*This issue includes*

Oswald Spengler

FRANZ BORKEMAN

Ronsard

J. B. MORTON

Fulda (744-1944)

DOM ROMANUS RIOS, O.S.B.

Masure's "Christian Sacrifice"

M. C. D'ARCY, S.J.

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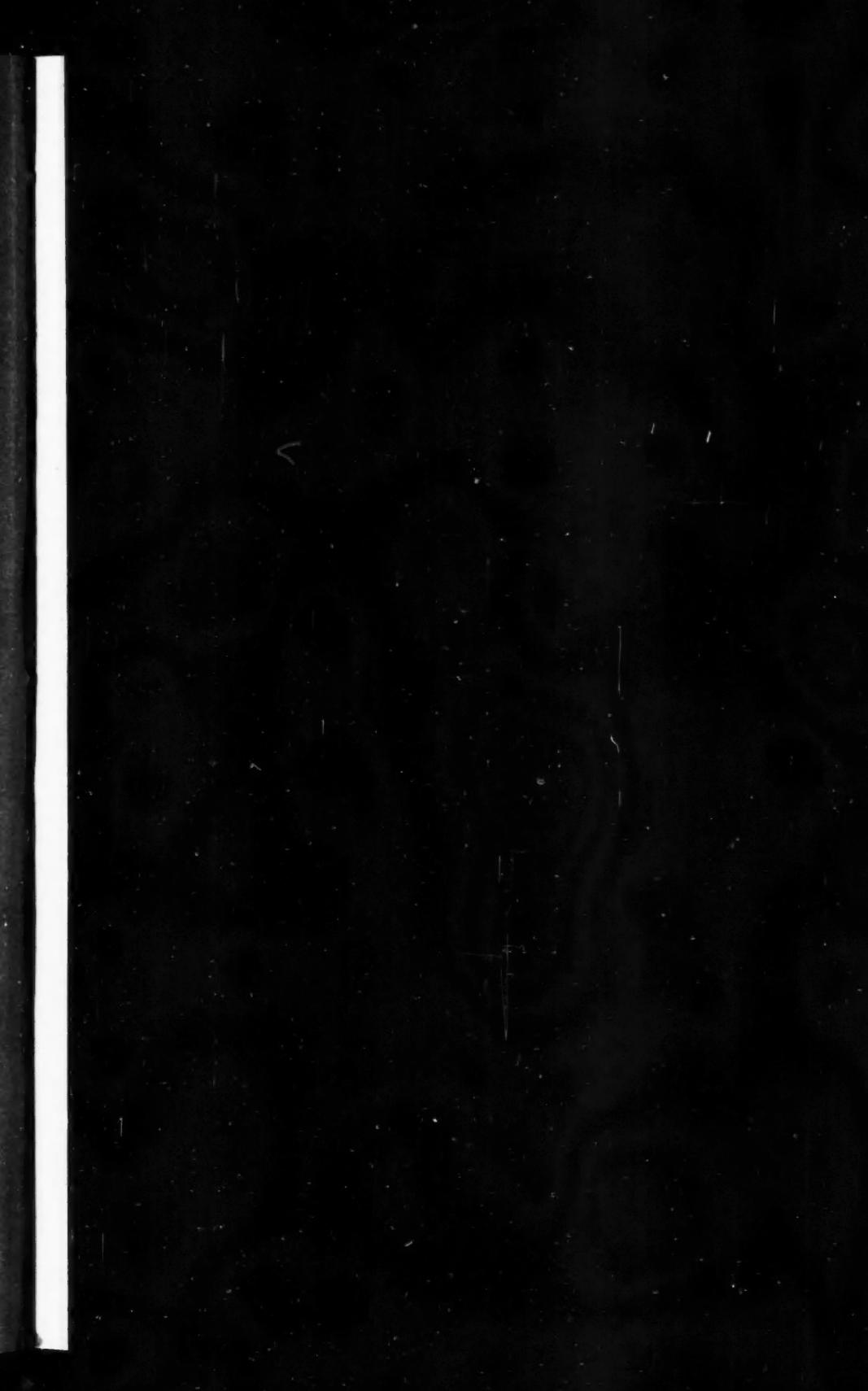
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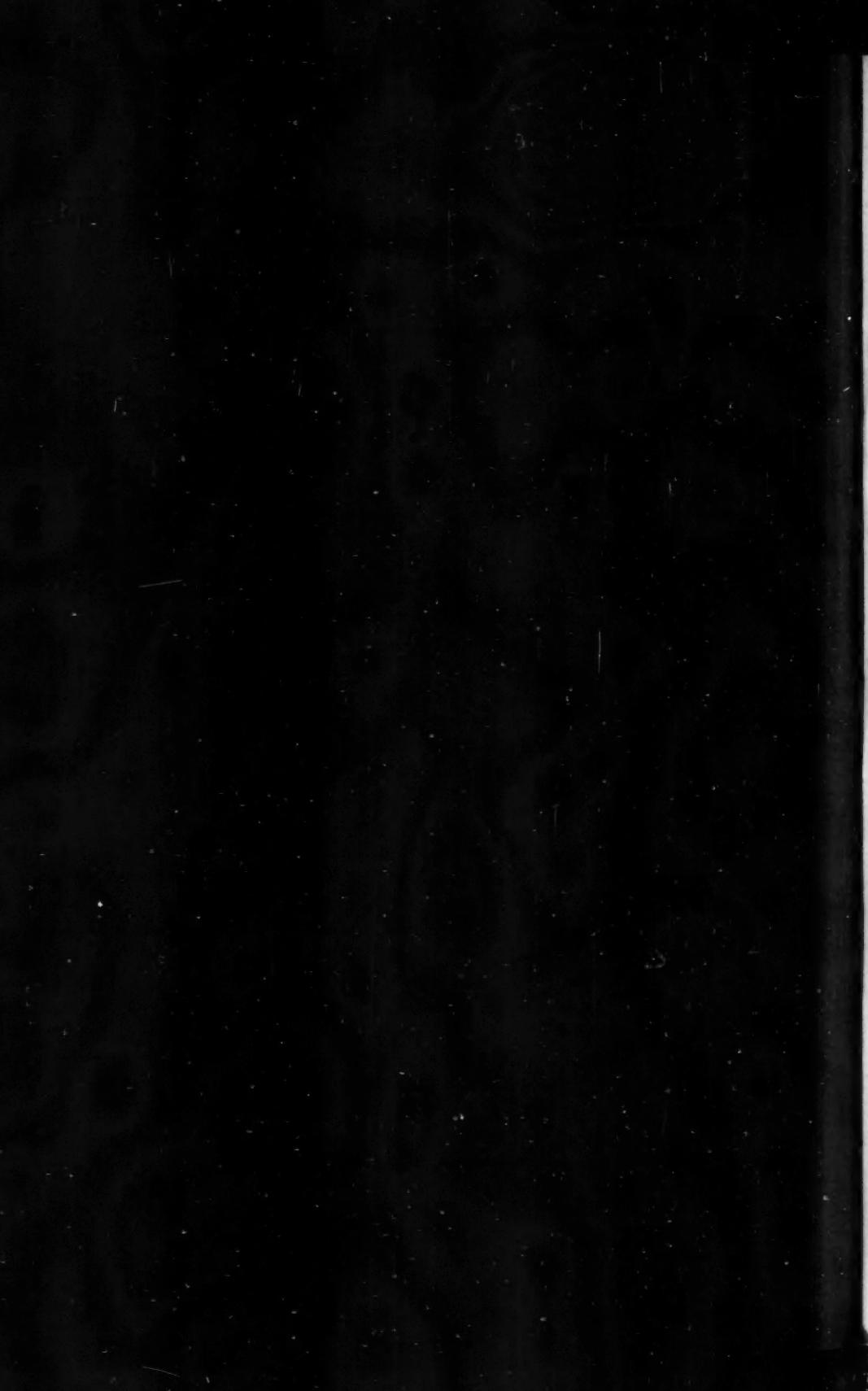
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# The Dublin Review

JULY, 1944

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## OSWALD SPENGLER

IT is the common fate of a certain type of intellectual and artistic creation that it is at first rewarded with sensational success, but that this success evaporates as the creative work continues. It is to be doubted whether *Troilus and Cressida* had the same success on the stage as *Romeo and Juliet*. It is a fact that Beethoven's early symphonies were received with shouts of triumph, but his late music was condemned for more than a century "as the music of a man with a bad hearing". It was Nietzsche who said of Goethe that his thought had not even started to exert any real influence, a remark nearly as true today as sixty years ago, and that despite the enthusiasm which greeted Goethe's early works. That enthusiasm, and the dutiful reverence paid to his later works, has not prevented the creations of his old age from being neglected: they are the ones of greatest permanent relevance.

The fate of Oswald Spengler, whose tenth death-day occurs during the present year, was a very similar one. When, in 1918, the *Decline of the West* was published in its first, immature shape, it was greeted, in Germany at least, with the feeling that a revelation had happened. But that was all. Spengler remoulded this first publication into the first volume of a work of two volumes, of which the second volume is much more mature and important than the first. And—his political writings apart—he followed this up with several smaller studies of great interest, concluded by a volume of posthumous writings where he starts on entirely new roads in a direction very different from that of his previous works. All these later mature labours were hardly noticed by professional historians, because Spengler was an intruder not taken seriously by them, and also remained unnoticed by the larger public which no longer found food in these later writings for its sensationalism. Before the real importance of Spengler can emerge, it will be necessary at first to rediscover his most relevant writings.

The comparison with the fate of Goethe would have pleased Spengler. He never tired to emphasize his dependence upon the grandmaster of German poetry, and his view about his own relation to Goethe was substantially correct. It is the affinity between the two which has made their posthumous fate so

similar. It is easy to define that affinity, at least in a negative way. To the mechanical interpretation of nature Goethe had opposed an "organic" interpretation where life was everything and the lifeless irrelevant. To the economic, statistical, pragmatic interpretation of history Spengler opposed an "organic" view which treated historical units like living beings, with an intrinsic fate and a law of growth and decline. Putting it in this negative way, it does not seem very original. The originality and the creative achievement, in the case of Spengler as in that of Goethe, comes out where the rejection of the mechanical point of view transforms itself into a positive doctrine of life.

In order to bring out the originality of Spengler's approach, it will be sufficient to contrast it with some other "organic" philosophies of history, such as the romantic age has produced in great numbers. They have all in common the hatred of the mechanical age and its values, and in this sense they all reject the belief in progress which was the dominating philosophy of the nineteenth century. But what a difference between these various types of "organic" pessimism and the philosophy of Spengler!

Schopenhauer, whom Spengler heartily disliked, had denied any significance to history because life was always the same misery, and the outward forms did not matter. Leopold von Ranke, the grand old man of the leading German school of history, had denied the existence of laws of development and insisted that "every period is directly connected with God"—a great truth, but hardly an argument for rejecting the search after a law of historical development. Carlyle had insisted upon the quasi-miraculous rôle of great personalities, so that these would count much more than the general trend among which they acted. One school of romantics had denied significance to the modern age and found relevant history only in the past. Letting all these views pass in review is to realize how far we have advanced in historical insight during the twentieth century. The nineteenth century was substantially divided between two schools of historical interpretation: the one denied the existence of any pattern of historical development; the other accepted such a pattern—but it was invariably a rigid unilineal pattern of progress from aboriginal man to industrial man.

During the twentieth century the situation began to change. A few scholars began to see the possibility of a determined pattern of historical evolution which yet need not be a pattern of unilineal progress. "Rise and decline" had been a favourite subject with social philosophers ever since Macchiavelli, but for a long time both rise and decline appeared as the accidental results of institutions which could be changed at will. Those who believed

in necessary development only accepted rise, and regarded the declines regularly following it as untoward incidents not worthy of a theory. Vico, the great Neapolitan of the eighteenth century, whose main ideas were so very near to those of Spengler, is perhaps the only exception. He certainly was the first to conceive of both rise and decline as necessary elements of the historical process. Yet for a century his thought went unheeded, and when finally Hegel rediscovered him he characteristically cut out his doctrine of decline.

But apart from this, even where rise and decline were studied, they were investigated with reference to nations only. Now one of the first and basic achievements of Spengler was this that he demonstrated, with a great wealth of material, that the nation is not the right sort of subject for developing general laws of rise and decline. The nation is something specifically Western. No other civilization knew it, not at least as the basic political unit. Every civilization has its own type of articulation. The Chinese civilization, nearest perhaps to our West in this respect, was at one time articulated into "warring states", which were territorial units like our nations. But they had one and the same literary language, and it is not apparent that their antagonisms were in any way related to different ways of life. Egypt knew no political differentiation of this type at all. In Babylonia and in classical antiquity, the city state constituted a basic unit which had very little in common with our nations. A history of the Greeks, as has been so often attempted, is meaningless; there can only be either a history of classical antiquity as a whole, or of individual city states. In the early Christian era churches successfully competed with states for the rôle of fundamental units, and the history of that civilization should therefore to a large extent be written as that of the rise and decline of churches—a procedure instinctively adopted by all historians in dealing with Islam, Nestorianism, Monophysitism, etc. In a word, taking the nation as the basic unit is to take a part instead of the whole, and a part at that which belongs to only one whole, our modern Western civilization. In fact, of course, that there are several such wholes.

Spengler was the first to develop a firm grasp of the fact that the basic units of history are "civilizations", and that the first task of the philosopher of history is to identify them. He had his precursors, of whom the Austrian art historian Riegl was probably the most important, and others developed and rectified his ideas. (A. J. Toynbee's study of history is probably the most important post-Spenglerian contribution to the doctrine of civilizations.) A new chapter in the study of history had opened

with its first firm formulation in Spengler's *Decline of the West*. At this point already it is obvious that, although the decline of our own civilization provided a flashy title for Spengler's first work, as it had prompted his first researches, this starting point was dwarfed by his later generalizations.

Some of these generalizations are implicit in what we said above about nations. In a systematic way wholly alien to the doctrinal carelessness of most previous historical research, Spengler insisted that every civilization must differ in every essential aspect from every other civilization. Though undeniably the same, basic aspects of social life were to be found in every civilization, though each of them had a religion, a science, various branches of art, a political organization, an economic life, and institutions of family life, yet the shape of these aspects of social life differed radically from one civilization to another. In one of its aspects Spengler's teaching consists of one long chain of analogies. But in another aspect, it is one long protest against false analogies. In his system it is forbidden to draw parallels between, let alone identify, apparently similar forms of life in one civilization and another, on the simple ground of a superficial likeness of appearance. In the beginning of the *Decline* he describes it as the main task of his method to teach historians to make the right sort of comparisons and to avoid the wrong ones. This ability to distinguish between the really parallel and the only superficially similar in history he calls "morphological tact" and it is, in his mind, the main ability demanded of the true historian. The concept is borrowed from Goethe's *Metamorphosis of Plants*. It is one of the most telling embodiments of Spengler's "organic" approach to history. History, he maintains, cannot be understood with the experimental and mathematical methods evolved by science. Life, he maintains with Bergson, is not grasped in this way. It has intrinsic laws of development which can only be grasped, not demonstrated. But if they cannot be demonstrated, they can be formulated nevertheless, and be made transparent and then able to see and to understand.

Civilizations he compares with plants. Like plants they have certain basic organs, which are necessary to the existence of all higher plants; to these, in society, correspond what we above called the various "aspects" of social life—a term borrowed by us from B. Malinovski's functional sociology. Like plants, civilizations have a law of growth and of decline and death, always fundamentally the same. But as in the vegetal and animal world one individual differs essentially from every other, so in the world of civilizations. The right comparisons are those

between the same aspects or organs of various civilizations. It is correct to say—in classical antiquity the Polis took the place of our modern nations. Correct are also the comparisons between parallel stages of development of various civilization. It is correct to compare the Trojan war and the crusades, the conquests of Alexander and those of Napoleon, our present age and the era of the Roman revolutions. But it is incorrect to compare the ancient and the modern Greeks—because the unity of the ancient Greeks was merely linguistic and they did not constitute a nation. It is incorrect to compare the South African War with the conquest of Mexico—because they belong to totally different stages in the development of Western civilization. It is incorrect to compare modern and Athenian democracy—for the same reason—whereas it is correct to compare Athenian democracy and the Bourbon monarchy, despite the glaring differences of the two in outward appearance, because they belong to parallel stages of development within their respective civilizations.

If the right comparisons are made, then contrasts become as revealing as similarities. The latter reveal the unchanging identity of the law of development of all civilizations, the former the specific difference which divides one civilization from another. What, in classical antiquity, assumed the shape of democracy, assumed the shape of absolute monarchy in the West. Spengler unhesitatingly interprets this contrast as one instance of a basic difference between the two civilizations revealed in every aspect of their existence. Sense of tradition, ties with the past, care for the future, are the essence of Western monarchy. Living in the moment, with no regard to any kind of permanence or heredity, is the essence of the democracy of the Polis.

Thus the whole of the study of history resolves itself for Spengler into an art of comparisons. At this point his profound affinity with Goethe is most strongly evident. Goethe too had rejected the “destructive” experimental method of modern chemistry, maintaining that it would never solve the mystery of life, but only succeed in resolving nature into its dead component parts. He too had maintained that there was no secret in nature in the sense in which science sought the solution of a problem behind the phenomena. He had said that in nature nothing was outside and nothing inside, that everything was equally patent and equally hidden, and that only the interpretative sense could hope to understand the process of life. No deeper challenge to the logico-mathematical approach is conceivable. That, too, is the reason why, in an age convinced of the wonder-key forces of science, Goethe's most important thought fell flat. And if

today the "religion of science" has lost some of its strength, it is still strong enough to discredit any fundamentally different approach. The struggle round Spengler is, to a large extent, a struggle round the question whether the logico-numerical methods of science are fit to throw light upon the basic problems of collective life. Spengler's answer is emphatically in the negative.

Comparisons of the type just indicated between parallel aspects of various civilizations lead to the conclusion that one and the same basic approach to life is revealed in every aspect of one civilization. The various aspects of any given civilization reveal themselves as reflexes of such a fundamental approach. Spengler therefore regards them as symbols of one and the same basic attitude. But how can this basic attitude be defined? Here Spengler's philosophy faces its most difficult problem.

Spengler did not share Goethe's complete disregard of mathematics. Before the success of the *Decline* he had himself been a math's master at a school in Hamburg. He was fascinated by the contrast between these two contrasting approaches to life, the mathematical approach with its method proceeding through logical proof, and the historical method operating through morphological tact. Kantian reminiscences, which influenced him strongly though unconsciously, inclined him to look for the inner experience of Space for any *a priori* which would be apt to form the subsequent experience of the external world. Modern physics had taught that the Newtonian concept of space and movement was not the only possible one. If on the one hand the inner experience of space preformed any other subsequent experience—as Kant had tried to prove—if, on the other hand, the Newtonian and Kantian conception of the universe was arbitrary—as proved by the non-Euclidean geometries and later by the theory of relativity—then it was a short step only to contend that each civilization had a different conception of space, of the external world, and that this specific conception of space, different in every one of the great civilizations, was the *a priori* which preformed all later developments of that civilization. Thus the conception of space became the "Ursymbol", the basic, *a priori* symbol of every one of the eight great civilizations Spengler tried to identify. He made the meaning of this conception clear through the contrast between the classical and the modern civilization. Classical civilization conceives of space as a three-dimensional, limited, corporeal unit. The space containing nothing is for Plato "that which is not", and Aristotle substantially used the same concept. The contrast with modern mathematics and physics, centring round

problems of the infinite, is indeed staggering. Clear insight into this contrast enabled Spengler to write some of his finest pages about the illusion of recapturing the classical way of life, an illusion which haunted the West throughout its history, but Germany more than any other part of the West.

Yet Spengler himself gradually saw that the concept was incomplete and unsatisfactory. The contrast between various conceptions of space, important as it is, is not deep enough to form an unbridgeable chasm between the space conception of one civilization and another. It is not true that we are unable to understand ancient mathematics, though the ancients might have been unable to understand ours. And there is no reason to attribute pre-eminence to the conception of space. Time, as the general measure of inner experience, is at least as important. Here Spengler could find much safer ground. For space, belonging to the outside world, implies a certain measure of objectivity, whereas it is not difficult to prove, as Bergson has proved, that in one sense time is purely subjective. Gradually, we see Spengler's Ursymbol move from the conception of space to the conception of time. The contrast between antiquity and modernity is demonstrated in his later work by our profound sense of past and future contrasted with the classical concentration upon the present moment. Here Spengler's Ursymbol is in line with Bergson's teaching, an undeniable affinity which Spengler as much disliked as he loved the kinship of his ideas with those of Goethe.

But this change of emphasis, which removed one of the most telling objections against Spengler's work as it had been in its earliest shape, did not solve the problem of the Ursymbol, which remained the crux of his system, and at the same time its weakest point. Before giving our own criticism, we shall first try to restate the problem.

It has been seen that the Ursymbol consists at bottom of a specific kind of perception of the outer and inner world, which is reflected in all creations of a civilization. In other words, the unity of the Ursymbol permeating all the most varied aspects of a civilization is expressed in the unity of this civilization style of life. It is from the angle of style, not of function or of historical descent, that Spengler attempts to understand the products of civilization. There was no influence more strongly operative in the formation of this conception than the most modern versions of the history of the arts. Now this principle, which is the whole of Spengler's philosophy in a nutshell, is conducive to two very fertile applications. In the first place, where such basic unity of style can be traced, there, in his view, is also unity of civilization.

Style serves to identify civilization, and to delimit the extent of individual civilizations in space and time. Among other applications of this principle Spengler postulates such unity of style between the early Christian and the Islamic civilizations which he therefore treats as a coherent whole covering the whole Near and Middle East—with its original centre in Palestine and Syria—over the fourth millennium B.C. The arguments brought forward in support of this theory cannot here be dealt with.

If the principle of the unity of style serves to identify civilizations, it also serves to identify the place of various expressions of the Ursymbol within the whole of any given civilization. Not everything fits into every civilization. There are forms of life with a special affinity for certain civilizations and an incompatibility with others. The absence of any developed church organization in classical antiquity is a case in point to illustrate the negative application of the principle. Its positive applications are more important. Every civilization has an art or arts specially expressive of its essence. Sculpture was bound to be paramount in a civilization where the limited body was regarded as the essence of the world. Painting with a perspective in depth was more adapted to a civilization in search of the infinite—more adapted but not sufficient, because the picture is still encompassed within narrow limits. The basic principles of any given civilization become more clearly expressed as the civilization in question develops. Thus, in this quest of the West for the infinite, music takes pride of place instead of painting in Western civilization at the moment when the latter reaches out towards final maturity. It is thus possible to establish not only a coherent line of development within one art, but also between different arts, between different aspects of civilization.

At the same time, according to Spengler, all civilizations, however different from one another, proceed in the same direction, in the sense that they are all subject to the same law of growth, maturity and decline. Every one of them is characterized by a profound crisis in the middle of its course—renaissance and reformation in our Western world, the emergence of Islam in the Arabic world, the crisis of the Persian wars in the ancient world, etc.—and after this crisis a culture reaches its climax. Then comes the age of “civilization” proper. The spiritual values recede, the material values win ascendancy. Brain power and money take the place of hereditary social hierarchies, scepticism, the place of faith, monster towns the place of castles and country towns. The civilization gradually ossifies, until civilized populations sink back into an amorphous state, similar in some respect to that preceding the rise of cultures, but different in that there

is no hope of resurrection. Civilized nations transform themselves into fellah nations.

It is a grandiose conception, but it cannot be put to valid use without thorough criticism. This criticism must start from the central notion of the Ursymbol. I should not quarrel with Spengler when he asserts the existence of such Ursymbole, of basic experiences of young populations when they enter upon a career of higher civilization, experiences which form for good their attitude to life. But I cannot admit that Ursymbole are ultimate facts of history. The query, after all, might not be so very important. If a phenomenon is rightly described one must be content to have it identified, and then continue with further research. Unfortunately, this course is beset with difficulties in the case of Spengler, because he is most strongly opposed to it and, in his philosophy, has created all possible barriers against its adoption. He insists a hundred times that the *Ursymbole* of the higher civilizations are the ultimate fact of history. They are beyond any further explanation. Each of them is a sort of *causa sui*, as if it were God. For no very obvious reason he refuses to acknowledge any Ursymbole of the primitives. Therefore, in the course of human destinies, the primitives have no significance. The Ursymbole are ultimate; that is, they are totally distinct from one another. Thus no connexion of any kind exists between any two civilizations. This outrage to historical science is defended with great acrimony. And as a civilization is simply the fullest possible expression of an Ursymbol, and Ursymbole are ultimate facts, it follows that it is impossible to give any meaning not only to the history of mankind as a whole, but even to any individual Ursymbol. Civilizations, therefore, "take their course in awe-inspiring senselessness". The grandiloquent epithet would be more applicable to Spengler's doctrine itself. So much vision, such a symphony of new insights, all of it only to conclude with a philosophy of absolute senselessness!

To this philosophy a few simple answers can be given. Symbols, whether "Ur", original, basic, or derived, are symbols of something. "Ursymbol" is therefore a relative term. Something can be an Ursymbol in relation to the subsequent development of civilization, but it cannot be independent from the general context of the human soul, to which it gives expression. The same thought can be expressed from another angle by saying that men do not live in order to give material expression to some style, but that they try to fulfil their needs, spiritual and material, within the shape of a style. The overrating of the notion of style is the weakest part of Spengler's philosophy, however

valuable his insistence on style may be as a methodical principle. Finally, Spengler himself implicitly, but amply, admits the existence of a common human background not in the least limited to zoology, as he would like to have it. For if all civilizations take an essentially identical course, even within the same compass of time—one millennium for each of them—then they must have a common function. If they develop on the whole the same aspects, that means that they cater for the same human needs, and are an expression of the same human spirit. And with this the doctrine of the nomadic character of civilizations unconnected with one another falls to the ground. There is no space here for more than mentioning A. J. Toynbee's theory of "affiliated civilizations" which has corrected Spengler's error.

What is the picture we get in attempting to correct such obvious mistakes. There is no comprehensive answer. On the contrary, a vast task of further research is formulated by the query. It is, to a large extent, the task of putting on its feet a doctrine which has been unnecessarily marred by the intrusion of a pessimistic philosophy, for personal and sociological reasons not here to be discussed. But I should not omit a reminder that this personal pessimism of Spengler affords only part of the explanation of his mistakes. How limited such personal explanations are in his case is shown by his latest work, which deals with the second millennium B.C. It was published posthumously. In this almost unknown study the period in question appears as a great turning point in the history of mankind, where an earlier group of high civilizations is replaced by a second group of a widely different character. Thus Spengler was dragged forward by his research and by it was carried beyond the limits of his pet philosophy. For a history of mankind is incompatible with his basic notions, and "groups of civilizations" are an outrage in terms of its original formulae. We should therefore not overstress the personal factor and prefer to assume that even in his deviations from patent fact Spengler was led into error by the character of his material. The simple fact is that he is right in stressing the difference in kind between "civilizations", i.e. periods when styles develop coherently, within a roughly calculable framework of time, towards a logical climax, and intermediate periods, where no such unity of style exists, and in consequence no coherent development is traceable, while time hardly matters at all. A connexion between civilizations no doubt exists, despite Spengler's denial. But it is a connexion different in kind from the connexion of various phases of one and the same civilization. Spengler was the first man ever to see this. It is a discovery equally important for the understanding of

civilizations and of the periods of transition, such as the Merovingian or the Mycene age.

But if this is an important discovery, it does not exclude the existence of facts pointing in a different direction, facts which Spengler did not want to see. It is true that civilizations emerge out of and merge back into barbarism, but the process is not as final as he would want us to believe. Many great civilizations—it is sufficient to mention China, India and Egypt—have passed through a second complete cycle of rise and decline after having passed through it once already. It is true that these second cycles—and at least in the case of India we can now even clearly distinguish three cycles—differ from the first ones. The geographical centre of their greatest achievements tends to shift to regions not so deeply furrowed by the earlier cycles of civilization—the centre of the oldest Indian civilization is on the upper Indus, that of the second cycle on the upper Ganges, that of the last cycle in the South—and every following cycle seems to be less original, wider in area, shorter in time. These are things which Spengler could not see, but they are also things which we can only see after he has made a beginning with problems of this kind.

The simple fact is that a general law of the development of thought has been verified once more in Spengler's case. New methods and philosophies are always, in the beginning, carried forward to the point of absurdity. A new principle can only assert itself by the radical denial of all older principles in the same field. Had Spengler not been so blind in many directions, he could not have worked out so fully all the implications of his finds. It is, as said already, the character of the material and the prospect of ever new discoveries in the line once accepted, which leads the pioneers into untenable exaggerations. After a time, the partial validity of older principles reasserts itself, not unusually even before the full meaning of the new principles has been grasped and their possibilities have been adequately exploited. Such a reassertion of older principles against Spengler's axiomatic pessimism is very necessary, but no less necessary is it to add the theory of cycles of civilization to the sum total of our historical insight.

FRANZ BORKEMAN.

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## NEW LINES IN FAR EASTERN DIPLOMACY

EVERY thinking man will admit that we are now living through a period of tremendous changes in thought and life, and that we are at the end of one period of history and the beginning of another: periods differing from each other as no two succeeding periods have ever before differed. The whole world stands at the cross-roads and the dawn of a new era rises on the horizon.

But a Westerner who has lived during the last decade in the Far East, submerging himself deeply in Eastern life and culture, earnestly endeavouring to flow with the completely different life-stream of the Chinese and Japanese peoples, carefully studying the immense changes that have taken place among them and trying to pierce, from the Eastern viewpoint, the meaning of the immense crisis into which the whole world is plunged, must realize this with particular intensity.

The Governments of Europe must cope with the changing Far East more than before. Hence a considerable discussion and planning about reform in the diplomatic and consular services.\* Proposals for the amalgamation of the foreign service, for safeguarding superannuation rights and for regrading posts have been adopted. As these services after the war is over will be of tremendous importance, especially in the Far East, the authorities should look upon the matter from every possible angle and not entirely neglect voices seldom heard and coming from circles not directly concerned.

Though I am an outsider who has indeed nothing to do with the actual working of these services, but who in the course of his stay in the Far East has met dozens of ambassadors, ministers and consuls and has observed the reaction of their work upon the natives, I would beg to offer a few suggestions that might prove somewhat useful for the formation of new aspirants to these services.

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\* The remarks of Wing-Commander James in the House of Commons were very interesting for me, because he describes the English foreign service as the best in the world, with the possible exception of the Dutch. General J. C. Pabst, the Dutch Minister in Tokyo, who after a nearly twenty years' stay in Japan died during his internment, was a very close friend of mine. Time and again we discussed the arts, religions and characteristics of the Orientals. Several times in the course of my cultural researches, he drew my attention to articles written in the Japanese language of which he had a fair working knowledge. He earnestly tried to understand the Orientals. His up-to-date Oriental library testified clearly to his constant and hard study. Although at his death his country was at war with Japan, the Japanese newspapers expressed their high esteem of his extensive knowledge and spoke with much praise about the sincere efforts he made to understand the Japanese people.

Presupposing the fact that creating a good impression, providing trustworthy information and the prevention of unnecessary friction are not the least among the purposes of the diplomatic and consular representation, I would say:

The young aspirant, who must be in the first place a man of noble and virtuous character, of tact and of keen observation, might start between 18 and 25 years of age with a two years' course in the Chinese or Japanese language at some European or American University, this being principally a study of the Chinese characters. The principles and the foundation of the spoken language may be laid, but to learn to speak the language is practically impossible in the West. Direct and continuous contact with the natives is therefore absolutely necessary. I myself have met two European Professors in the Japanese language who could scarcely keep up a simple conversation in the language though they were masters in the knowledge of characters. The simple reason was, of course, that they had lost the direct and continuous contact with the Japanese. The writing and reading of fifteen hundred Chinese characters may be put as the goal for these first two years. From the beginning of his study, the student looks for regular contact with Japanese or Chinese people who are always present in sufficient numbers in the great culture centres of Europe and America. From them he could learn the elements of the intricate Oriental etiquette. Some acquaintance with the history and the arts of the Far East should also be made during these two years, and in addition the student should be taught a disregard for Far Eastern travel books and journalistic information. Of the hundreds and hundreds of authors who have written about the Far East, the names of the few dozen worth reading should be made known to him.

After this two years' course the young man should go to Japan or China and live for one year in a well-educated native household as one of the family. On entering he would cease talking English, no matter how helpless he felt at the beginning. He would eat only native food and would try to accommodate himself as far as possible to the Oriental way of living, and would study the spoken and written language till the shelves creaked and his head was in a whirl. The reading and writing of twenty-two hundred characters could be put as the goal for this third year. (Seven hundred new ones.) Hereafter he would go for one year to some consulate in the interior to do translation work or something else in the line of his studies which should continue uninterruptedly. Outside his office hours he should resume his stay with some native family. At the end of this year he would be expected to know twenty-eight hundred characters. He

would then leave his desk for one year to start the most formative part of his training, a long travel, principally on foot through the greater part of the country, interrupted only by six months' farm work in three different provinces (two months in each).\* Everywhere he must open his eyes, ears and mouth, study the scenery, the vegetation, the customs, the dialects. He might possibly meet difficulties, but by kindness and sympathetic understanding these he would easily overcome. As he travels through parts where no European hotels are available and no European language is understood, this becomes his third year among the natives. During his travels he jots down his experiences and impressions, which will be worked out later. When this important year is over he should go back to his own country to study again for a year at the University or privately, this being principally a repetition of what he learned, a recollection of what he experienced. Furthermore during this time he ought to write a report about his travels to be presented later to a competent authority on things Oriental. From this report the examiner can make a fairly good judgement as to the various capabilities of the new aspirant. After having finished his survey, he would again present himself at the Foreign Office. Now, at last he is ready to start his consular or diplomatic career somewhere in the Far East. He has sufficient knowledge since the writing and reading of three thousand characters† will be more than enough, especially as the simplified writing will have been introduced everywhere both in China and Japan by the time the war is over. But above all he has some experience of the real life of the Orientals, and though still young he knows something no book can tell and no professor can teach him, and there will be no danger of his committing the grave errors and improprieties into which his predecessors of the "good old times", which are fortunately finished for ever, often quite unintentionally fell.

Now is the time for him to marry and to return to the Far East. Yes, indeed, Sir Francis Lindley‡ notwithstanding, I

\* For Japan a slight modification something like this might be more practicable; four months' farm work, one month working in a great factory and one month going out with the fishermen and living in fishing villages, which are to be found in sufficient number along the coasts both of the Pacific and the Japan sea.

† On purpose I have offered a low estimate of the number of characters. Though reading is necessary, talking and understanding are much more vital for the student.

‡ This former English Ambassador to Portugal and Japan declared quite recently at the farewell lunch of the Anglo-Portuguese Society to the Portuguese Ambassador, Dr. Monteiro, that bachelor ambassadors were successful. Nobody who knows anything at all about the Far East could possibly have said such a thing. Besides, it is a somewhat strange welcome for his successor, the Duke of Palmella, who has eleven children.

repeat now is a good time for him to marry, a most important element in the life of a member of the consular or diplomatic service. The bachelor who in the Far East so often develops into the man about town, should become rarer with the passage of time. Here I think is the place to issue a grave warning against the oft-repeated phrases: these questions are purely personal matters and the government as such has nothing whatsoever to do with them. I do my job at the office; there I work and do my duty and what I do outside the office is nobody's business.

If one speaks in this way, he clearly shows that he has not the least understanding of Oriental vision and Oriental judgement which is not passed according to the rules of Western logic, but which is formed as a result of an intuitive and vital grasp of the whole setting. By an irregular personal conduct the foreigner cannot fail to misrepresent his country and as a result he works to the detriment of his country's interests. Herein lies to a large extent the reason why the white man is so often despised in the East. It would be very easy for me to write a whole book on the harm done in this way. But as I have no wish to spend time on such a matter, nevertheless I trust that I shall get an attentive ear. It is of secondary importance to the Oriental whether one is learned, rich, a good sportsman, etc., since in the first place he looks for character. And one should not be surprised at this in countries where the influence of Confucius still retains a strong hold, for it was he who taught that the ideal government was founded not upon laws but upon ideals of personal conduct. We read in the *Analects*:

If the people be led by laws, and uniformity sought to be given them by punishments, they will try to avoid the punishment but have no sense of shame. If they be led by virtue, and uniformity sought to be given them by rules of propriety, they will have the sense of shame, and moreover will become good. When a prince's personal conduct is correct, his government is effective without the issuing of orders. If his personal conduct is not correct he may issue orders but they will not be followed.\*

And another Oriental classical scholar writes:

The ancient rulers who desired to exhibit superior qualities in the conduct of national affairs, governed their countries with extreme care. Such as desired to succeed in government, first gave attention to the ordering of the household. Those who wished to procure well-ordered households first gave the most careful attention to self cultivation. Those who wished to attain the ideals of self cultivation endeavoured to attain uprightness of heart. Those who desired an upright heart, cultivated a true will. Indeed from ruler to common man it was acknowledged that all worthy achievements centred in such self culture.

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\* *Analects*, Book II, chapter III, and Book XIII, chapter vi; taken from the unsurpassed translation of James Legge, a most outstanding English Orientalist.

I have read all the speeches of the Chiang Kai-sheks so far. (No one who knows anything of things Chinese doubts in the least about their absolute sincerity. The only objectors I found came from more or less questionable quarters.) Hundreds of times they refer to personal conduct, to moral integrity, and this is so repeatedly stressed that I would not hesitate to affirm that the Generalissimo is as fine a preacher as he is a soldier. One should only read Chiang Kai-shek's monograph on the New Life Movement.\* The far-reaching consequences of a lax personal conduct of people in the diplomatic or consular services is tremendously underestimated by the people in America and Europe. Nowhere is there to be found such a close scrutiny of the white man and his personal behaviour as in the Far East. Many and frequent conversations with Orientals have furnished me with abundant proof as to this statement.

But let us not lose sight of the young man who goes out to the Far East married and bringing up a family which will bring him a great esteem among the peoples of the family system. Having arrived in China or Japan he would still continue with his studies, and, if he liked, might make easily a special study of the religion, art, agriculture or industry of the country, which again would win for him a great esteem in what have always been the lands of scholars, and so he could do a great work for the furtherance of the relations between his own country and the Far East. As hundreds of Orientals have repeatedly told me (and many among them the highest officials) they were most impressed by those members of the consular and diplomatic staffs who combined noble, virtuous character with scholarship. I do not think it would be any disgrace, certainly not in the new China of the New Life Movement where the people are strongly encouraged daily to use heads, hearts and hands to the utmost, and where all forms of manual labour are highly extolled, for an ambassador or consul walking through the rice fields to be able to say to his Eastern companions: "Twenty years ago I stood in a field like this, planting rice and weeding, covered with mud. It was not an easy job, and I had a hard time at the beginning, but it did me a lot of good, and I learned to know your people and the hard conditions under which they often have to work; and now—more than ever—I admire them."

\* To anyone who has made a study of the New Life Movement, it must seem apparent that the movement is something magnificent. Notwithstanding the heaps of criticism that has been levelled against it and which did not fail to bring to light Chinese inefficiency, corruption, face saving, dirt, eye-wash and so on, which is indeed partly true, nevertheless one is forced to the conclusion that the New Life Movement, this struggle to a magnificent re-birth, is something grand and that it will make one of the most valuable contributions to China's future greatness.

I am sure people of the "good old days" will smile at these suggestions of the pitiable and ignorant outsider with his idealistic talk in the clouds. Let them smile.

Someone may say: "The Orientals must take us as we are whether they like it or not." Now it is my turn to smile and I will merely say: "Just wait and see."

Some days ago I showed the manuscript of this article to a certain diplomat who has been some five years in the Far East. After a torrent of praise which I did not expect at all, and which made me rather embarrassed, he made the following criticism: "According to my opinion it is indeed the only way to get insight into the people and their problems. Nevertheless your suggestions are impracticable since the official acting according to your advice will in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred begin to love the people and in doing so will lose, to a large extent, the cool objectivity [*sic!*] with which he must survey the natives. As a result he ceases to work in the interests of his own country." If the reader himself cannot answer this criticism after reading these lines, the case seems to me hopeless.

Another former ambassador remarked that my suggestions were very good, provided they were destined only for the interpreters. To this I would answer that in my opinion the embassies in the Far East will in future be called upon to play a role of outstanding importance. Therefore the need for an exceptionally competent head will be of such pressing urgency that the hopping from Ankara to China or from Madrid to Tokyo should, and I expect will, cease to be part of the role of an ambassador to the Far East. The danger of viewing everything from the same angle which might ensue could be avoided by more frequent visits to the ambassador's homeland.

Again, how can a head exercise control over or judge his subjects, when through lack of knowledge their work is completely outside the control of the ambassador? If an ambassador has not sufficient knowledge of things Oriental how can he guide or superintend the activities of his subordinates? How often has it not occurred that an ambassador had to follow the course marked out by the information which his subordinates supplied, the reliability of which information he was in no way competent to judge. The appointment of a new Cabinet Minister is in no way parallel to the appointment of a new ambassador. The former, though at first a stranger in his new department, after a very short period settles down and works himself in to his new office. Although he too needs advice, he is, within a fairly short time, able to judge to a certain extent the competence of his subordinates and the reliability of the information they supply.

This does not hold true of an ambassador to the Far East. When an ambassador comes out without sufficient knowledge of things Oriental, he cannot work himself in even after a period of five years. Many are the interesting stories I could relate of how an ambassador was worked in by his subordinates.

But isn't this asking too much? That this is asking a lot is perfectly true. Noble character, acute intelligence, deep knowledge, energy, these seem essential, but do not seem to be asking too much. Surely a great office demands a great man. After all, an ambassador is not a labourer, and a great benefit cannot fail to accrue if the future diplomats to the Far East are men of outstanding spiritual and intellectual dimensions.

Chester Holombe, for many years interpreter, Secretary of Legation and Acting Minister of the United States at Peking, wrote nearly half a century ago:

In graver affairs, misconceptions of the Chinese, mistaken views of their attitude, and consequent erroneous judgements and conduct toward them, are responsible for a large part of the friction and conflict between them and Western nations. They are not credited with the possession of the same spirit, motive, and feeling which animate and control the rest of the world. They are, only too frequently, neither granted the same rights, nor accorded the same privileges. The same measure of forbearance and consideration is not allowed them as is conceded to others. Governments, acting upon lines of purely selfish purposes, object to and at times have overcome by force the selfish or Patriotic opposition of the Chinese. Some men and some governments are reckless and indifferent to ultimate results, so long as their immediate purpose is effected. But the masses of the people are disposed to be fair-minded, and have no desire to injure China for the sake of their own advantage. More than this, they are sufficiently wise to accept, as an invariable truth, the statement that no wrong done to one individual or nation can be to the permanent advantage of any other.

It is important today as never before that misapprehensions should be removed, false impressions corrected, the truth told, and the Chinese Government and people be better understood. Ignorance is too expensive and unwise to be longer indulged in. There are many common points of contact and interest which a right mutual understanding will bring to light. Fairer judgements, and increased respect, will do more to promote all proper forms of intercourse and commerce than men-of-war and dynamite. And the Western world can best aid China to understand it, by means of an honest effort to understand China. . . .

Diplomacy in China is at once tiresome and exciting. It necessitates familiarity with a great range and variety of subjects, many of which are never heard of elsewhere. The representative at Peking is forced to be an educator in a double sense. He must inform the Chinese of Western matters with which they are unfamiliar. And he is constantly obliged to explain to his own government Oriental peculiarities, customs, and laws, since, without such explanation, his conduct of public affairs would appear peculiar and at times deserving of censure. . . .

Many matters are constantly cropping up to vex and complicate the labours of a diplomatic representative at Peking. He must know something about them to be at all fit for his position. And he must know a good

deal about them, in order to so conduct his business as to reduce the inevitable friction between Eastern and Western ideas and policies to a minimum.

Unfortunately it has been far too much the habit of diplomatists at Peking to ignore and ride roughshod over any protests and objections of the Chinese which were based upon conditions which they did not understand.

Manifestly, the Chinese Government must carry out in their entirety its treaty obligations, and local ideas and laws must give way at any points of conflict. But there are wise and unwise ways by which to accomplish this result. And he who pushes roughly ahead, setting his heavy foot upon the most sensitive and sacred ideas, traditions and prejudices of the Chinese, may be a most energetic man of business, but assuredly is not a good diplomat. One success, won by such processes, is more harmful to the government which he represents than many defeats.

Someone may say that this was written fifty years ago and does not apply at the present time.

In that case I should advise him to read Sir Meyrick Hewlett's *Forty Years in China*, a book just published and straight from the printer. This well experienced author consistently acted on the principle that anything can be done with the Chinese by understanding them thoroughly, winning their friendship and making them feel that you trust them. He succeeded, thanks to his continuous endeavours in the field of study and observation. It is especially for the future generation of officials that I quote some lines from the beautiful last chapter of his book; they should be read, these lines, time and again, in order to provide themselves with a good antidote against the poison of the old-timers and in order to armour themselves against such sneering utterances as: "You should be above that sort of thing. Leave that to the Interpreters. Remain normal and don't become a native." That's the poison, and here is the antidote as applied by Sir Meyrick with the best result:

I do not believe that if you speak Chinese you of necessity become less and less English. Neither do I believe that if you write Chinese, your mentality has become such that you are perhaps not quite normal.\* Rather do I feel that by speaking Chinese you can get to the heart of the people, by writing you win their innermost thoughts. I was not conscious of any mental peculiarity when I retired after thirty-seven years service, in spite of speaking and writing Chinese with sufficient ease.

Furthermore, I may introduce a Chinese intellectual talking with a foreigner:

"A few of the consuls have looked into our sacred books and taken the trouble to understand us, but generally a consul is more than satisfied when he can translate a despatch or conduct an interview without the help of his interpreter. There can be no lasting and acceptable intercourse unless we can talk about

history, literature, poetry, or some topic fit for the educated. Our dealings with each other are official or strictly mercenary and we don't like that. If, as an exception, a member of the consular or diplomatic service reveres the learning of our country, his fellow colleagues laugh at him, saying: He has fallen into the ways of the Chinaman. When this does not change, I think it is better to stop all intercourse. Then it would be more advisable to stay in the West and leave us in peace."

I myself was time and again urged by several ambassadors to attempt something in the cultural field in order that the white man should not be left too far behind the Oriental in this respect. "Provide me with more arguments," remarked an ambassador to me, "so that I can better answer the objections they so often put to me: 'you people are only interested in business. Where are the men who study our music, painting, literature, etc.? We want more cultural exchange'."\*

Finally, I may again quote China's first lady:

China does not deserve the reputation that has been thrust upon her. Short-sighted and uncharitable views should no doubt be ascribed mostly to some unpleasant personal experience or to the Occident's failure to take into consideration the centuries of background of the Chinese race. Considering the fact that China overthrew a dynasty, then successfully combated the various elements who endeavoured to seize authority by force, and at the same time maintained national entity, the results compare more than favourably with what happened in some Occidental countries when the fate of the nation was decided by revolution. . . .

It is completely misleading to apply foreign standards. China must be measured by Chinese standards, with accurate knowledge of her immediate, as well as her ancient past, to serve as a yardstick. Otherwise it is inevitable that unwarranted and inaccurate conclusions should be arrived at. One has to be particularly meticulous about realities in China in order to prevent prejudice distorting judgement.

So much for these quotations.

To conclude this article, which honestly I have not enjoyed writing, but which I wrote with the sole purpose that it might do some good towards the future relations between East and West which occupy so prominent a place in my heart, I wish to state that the outspoken criticism revealed in the above lines has not been at all influenced by any personal disagreeable experience with members of the diplomatic or consular staffs. As a matter of fact I have had no personal disagreeable experiences whatso-

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\* The author tried hard and earnestly to do something in this way and was fortunate enough to have accepted for publication a book written in the Japanese tongue, in addition to two others in two different European languages. The manuscripts of several other publications, one concerned with contemporary Chinese painting, one dealing with contemporary Japanese music, and a third on Oriental characteristics, he had to leave behind.

ever. The ambassadors, ministers, secretaries, consuls, interpreters, chancellors, with whom I came into contact and among whom are people I highly esteem, have been consistently kind towards me. Not once, when I begged for the use of their personal libraries or to get access to cultural institutions in the Far East—not an easy task for an ordinary person—I repeat not once was I refused, but on the contrary I experienced the most courteous and friendly co-operation that could be imagined.

Nevertheless . . .

H. V. STRAELEN, S.V.D.

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## WHAT CAN BE DONE WITH A DEFEATED JAPAN?

ALL are agreed that defeat is the sole cure for nations suffering from the *Herrenvolk* complaint. The Japanese have convinced themselves successfully that they are a race apart and that they are superior to, and of a different essence from, the rest of humanity. They trace their special qualities to the divine origins of their race—the rest of mankind may be descended from monkeys, but *they* spring from the Sun Goddess herself—and to their Emperor, who is to them a “manifest Divinity”. By virtue of their special status it is their destiny to rule the world; to them it is obvious that their Emperor, sole link with the Age of the Gods, should lead mankind back along the paths of antique virtue to the natural way of man, long since abandoned. There mankind would live in harmony with nature and with one another under the welcome shade of the Japanese roof. “*Hakko Ichiu*”, all the world under one roof, is their slogan, and this is its meaning. To them any action which brings this ideal state of affairs nearer is worthy of all praise. The greater glory of the Emperor of Japan and of the divine Japanese race is the end in view; all and anything that contributes to it is justified. Hence the bravery born of fanaticism, and hence the treachery; Port Arthur and Pearl Harbour are condoned, *as long as they succeed*. But—and this is the important point—in order to win approval, such actions must succeed. If they do not succeed—or, more accurately, if they are known to the Japanese people to have failed—then they are condemned; their perpetrators and those responsible for them are thought to have misled the Emperor by their ill advice—or, in

the Japanese idiom, "to have failed to carry out the Imperial will". It was on this charge that the unpopularity of those responsible for acquiescing in the Treaty of Portsmouth and for agreeing to the low naval ratio at the Washington Conference grew. It was because the Japanese armed forces could with some justification point to a recent history of unbroken success that they were able to claim to be carrying out the will of the Emperor. Doubtless, much else, such as their championship of the poor peasant against the corrupt plutocrat and their much advertised frugal selfless existence, contributed to their popularity, but the basis of it was and is success. If the Japanese armed forces are known to the Japanese people to have failed, their popularity will ebb; they will be condemned, since to the Japanese it will be as clear as day that they have not carried out the will of the Emperor.

The first task, therefore, of the United Nations must be to inflict complete defeat on the Japanese armed forces. Their second and equally important task is to see that the Japanese people realize to the full that their armed forces have suffered a complete defeat and that they fix the blame for their defeat fairly and squarely on those responsible for the conduct of the armed forces. It must be assumed that the Japanese armed forces will strain every nerve to foist the responsibility for their defeat on to other elements in the country and that they will do everything in their power to find some scapegoat sensed to have committed the sacrilege of failing to carry out the Imperial will. If, however, the defeat is complete, it should not be beyond our capacity to fasten responsibility for it on to the militarists, to whom it belongs. The Japanese people, whose enthusiasms are notoriously short, will have lost patience with their militarists, and should therefore be disposed to discredit them. Let us therefore assume that the majority of the Japanese people will agree that their militarists have led the Emperor astray and that they have failed to carry out the will of the Emperor; to what elements in the Japanese nation will they then entrust the task of advising the Emperor and of carrying out his will?

In the event of an Anglo-American victory, it may be supposed that whatever shreds of liberal democracy total war leaves to Britain and America will seem attractive to the world in general. They will have the prestige of success and many will seek to ape the political systems of the victorious nations. But there is also the Russian system, which will offer rival attractions whether Russia enters the Far Eastern conflict or not, to be considered, and also the natural tendency of the vanquished to dislike the victor;

these points will be dealt with separately. At all events, the second vital task will be to see that the Japanese people are disposed to place faith in elements in Japan sympathetic to Anglo-American ideals and to attempt to build up such elements in Japanese public estimation. Do such elements exist and could they command the requisite respect? The obvious element to encourage would at first sight seem to be the remnants of those liberals who flourished in Japan for a decade after the last war. It is to them that the Japanese people doubtless expects us to appeal, and the ideology for which they stand will be in the ascendant. But it is submitted that they are discredited in the eyes of the Japanese people and that, having once failed in their task, it is unlikely that they could reinstate authority. They are sensed to have "misled the Emperor" and they are associated with an epoch of moral licence, of corrupt political parties and of decay in Japanese national institutions.\* Of the socialist parties, something similar could be stated. It is therefore not so much to political elements of like complexion to our own that we must appeal, but rather to the mature and wise among the Japanese people. We must not necessarily offer them or expect them to adopt a Western political livery, but rather encourage them to think along reasonable international lines and leave them to evolve their own internal political system in their own Japanese way.

What is meant by mature and wise Japanese? There are, among the Japanese, men of all shades of political opinion who are fully aware that Japan must take her place in the comity of nations, that Japan is not fitted by nature to control vast areas of Asia, and who distrust the methods of the militarists. To such, the situation in Europe in 1940 and the prospects which it offered to Japan of laying hands on Asia probably seemed a dangerous temptation; they doubtless deplored the declaration of war in 1941, but it may be assumed that the quick victories which Japan at first gained quieted their misgivings and that they convinced themselves that the West was really decadent and that perhaps Japan's era had come. Recent events, however, will have roused

\* It will be suggested that epochs of moral licence are invariably attractive, and that the relicts of Japanese liberalism might derive popularity among the Japanese people through their connection with an easy-going period of pleasant living. It might even seem expedient to appeal through political warfare to the pleasure-loving instincts of the Japanese people, and endeavour in this manner to build up popularity for liberal ways. This might be the case were the moral licence with which the liberals are connected of a Japanese type; unfortunately, the liberals are associated with wicked alien ways. It might appear successful to encourage the Japanese to hanker after Japanese vices if that would further a political warfare aim. It would surely be unwise to identify our cause with the encouragement of dance-halls and enthusiastic amateurs of sex (the alien vices associated in the Japanese mind with their liberal period) which do not fit into the Japanese pattern of living and which are anyhow largely superfluous to the pleasure-bent Japanese.

their former cares. To such persons we should appeal through sweet reason. Japan about to suffer defeat needs friends; in order to continue to exist at all she must be willing to co-operate with others. On the other hand, sweet reason must be tempered with some measure of material comfort. In their desire to see their country being able to continue to run at all, the wise Japanese will expect certain economic help, and upon our willingness to extend that help may depend the measure of success of our blandishments.

In this connexion it is well to consider the role of Russia. The prestige of Russia, whether she fights against Japan or not, will be enormously enhanced by her victories against the admired German Army. In addition, Russia presents herself to the East in the guise of a kindly nurse; she is to some extent a link between East and West. To these attractions would be the added one of not having taken part in humiliating Japan by defeating her, if Russia continues her present attitude. The natural tendency on the part of the conquered to dislike the ways of the victor would also make itself felt, and the Japanese might view so successful a system with sympathy. They will have read more objective and sensible accounts of Russia—they appear in quantity in the Japanese press of the moment—than of countries with which they are at war. In addition, the Japanese are born subjects of a totalitarian state; there is nothing the individual Japanese likes more than to have his path clearly marked out for him by authority. The authoritarian state successful in war must, therefore, appeal strongly to him, since there is nothing he fears more than having to think for himself, and being faced with the choice of good or evil. Against this must be set Japan's avowed revulsion to an ill-defined "Communism" and her careful nourishing of the Russian bogey. This alleged dislike of Russia did not, however, prevent the Japanese from reading Russian literature with avidity; nor did it deter the military from taking many a leaf from the Communist book. It is submitted that the attitude of Japan to Russia is that of a creature bemused—a mixture of fascination and revulsion. The most powerful factor working against using Russia as a model would be the traditional position of the Emperor, treated in this paper as the focal point of the Japanese outlook. But it must be mentioned that the Japanese excel as syncretists; that the reconciling of opposites is bred into them through the *Zen* tradition, and that they show a remarkable capacity to eliminate obstacles by the simple expedient of failing to be aware of them. It is thus that the sect of *Tenrikyo* combines in its innocence Christianity, Buddhism, Islam and Shinto! It may be thus that Japan will combine Nipponese theocracy with

Communism. At least, the very superior attractions offered by a Russia successful in the West and non-belligerent in the East should not be underestimated.

The tasks therefore are formidable; first to see that the Japanese people do blame their militarists for their military defeat and that they realize that their militarists have misled their Emperor and failed to carry out his will; next to see that the mature, enlightened, and sensible Japanese are helped (and this will also entail economic help) to assert their authority over the Japanese people, and that they are encouraged to lead them towards the paths of international co-operation, decency, and justice. There is, however, a third task which merits serious consideration. We may well inflict crushing defeat on the Japanese, we may see that the Japanese appreciates correctly the reasons for this defeat and that those among them swayed by sweet reason govern the country, but we would also do well to ensure that all self-esteem is not knocked out of the Japanese people, and that, in their misery, they are not offered perhaps overwhelming temptations to devise gods even fouler than those whose deceit they have been forced with so much pain to discover. We must offer them sweet reason, but men excited by deep grief turn only gradually and gently to such seemingly austere consolation—they may, indeed, not turn to it at all, and instead nurse a sullen rage that may lie concealed for a decade, only to burst forth and inflict new horror on an astonished world. We must therefore make the transition from frenzy to normal calm as easy as we can without indulging in misplaced sentimentality which others too often take for cowardice. The intense nationalism of the Japanese and the artificial encouragement given to their natural distaste for Western ways make it imperative that we offer them in their depression something that is both specifically Japanese and, from our point of view, harmless. It is submitted that we should say to them: "You have learned that military aggression does not pay; you now know that your militarists have led your Emperor astray, and you realize that the name of Japanese militarism inspires revulsion throughout the world. Remember, on the other hand, that your peaceful achievements, your superb craftsmanship, your poetic imagination, your art and your literature are admired throughout the civilized world; when others revere the name of Japan it is this solid, peaceful and great contribution made to civilization which they honour." Let us make the Japanese nation feel that the arts of peace are worth cultivating since these *have* succeeded in spreading the greater glory of the Japanese Emperor, where aggressive methods have so singularly failed. Let us, for our

part, pay tribute where tribute is due, thus showing that our talk of justice is not hypocrisy. We would at the same time be offering something positive and something Japanese to which the humiliated Japanese people might safely cling—something not only harmless but beneficial to occupy minds that hysterical creeds might otherwise fill. We would thereby make the transition from sullen grief to sweet reason easier and thus simplify the task of the enlightened Japanese in whose care we wish to see the country placed. Let us therefore, while attempting to educate Japanese opinion to see the folly of their aggressive ways, show in return that we ourselves are educated enough to appreciate the good in Japan. Let us not betray ignorance by belittling those solid Japanese achievements to which it is very strongly in our interest to encourage the Japanese to turn, in order that they may be induced to make a peaceful and a truly great contribution to civilization.

A CORRESPONDENT FROM JAPAN.

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## FULDA\*

744-1944

**I**T was on 12 March, 744, that St. Sturmi took possession, in the name of his master and bishop St. Boniface, of a tract of land by the River Fulda, in the heart of the great German forest of Buchonia. The land had been granted to St. Boniface for the foundation of a new Benedictine Abbey. Sturmi's first act was to erect a cross upon it, and with this historic gesture he registered, all unwittingly, the opening of the most important stage in the conversion of the Germanies. It is due to the enterprising foresight of Boniface, the apostle of Germany and one of the greatest Englishmen of all times, that Fulda became, and remains to this day, the centre and symbol of Christian tradition throughout the German lands. Beside the towering personality of Boniface all other missionaries of that age are dwarfed. Indeed it is true to say that he has no rival among

\* Note. The reader will find a very extensive bibliography on Fulda in Dom Henry Cottineau, O.S.B., *Répertoire Topo-bibliographique des Abbayes et Prieurés* Macon, 1936 (three columns of very close print in large IV); or in Chévalier, *Répertoire des Sources historiques du Moyen Age. Topo-bibliographie.* 1894-99. To. 1, pp. 1253-4.

Christian missionaries from the time of St. Paul to that of St. Francis Xavier. In the words of Christopher Dawson\*

St. Boniface of Crediton, "the Apostle of Germany", (was) a man who had a deeper influence on the history of Europe than any Englishman who has ever lived.

The career of St. Boniface, therefore, forms an important chapter in the general history of Western civilization. Born in Devonshire between the years 675 and 680, Winfrid—to give him his Saxon name—at the age of seven entered a monastery at Exeter as an oblate. At the age of twenty he joined the community of Nursling, near Winchester, where he taught in the monastic school and seemed destined for a distinguished academic career. When at the age of thirty he was ordained priest, he had already won the respect of his monastic brethren and of Bishop Daniel of Winchester, who became his life-long friend. It was precisely at this time, when a distinguished future in the monastic world lay before him, that he resolved to become a missionary. With this object he journeyed to Friesland in 716, but, owing to the unfavourable political situation, his stay was short. On his return to his monastic home his brethren wished to retain him as their abbot; but, at Winfrid's own earnest entreaty, Bishop Daniel persuaded them to let the dignity pass to another. The Saint still heard the call of the Friesian mission, but, taught by his recent failure, he saw that it was necessary for him to arrive in the mission field vested with official authority, both ecclesiastical and civil. Accordingly in 718 he set out for Rome in quest of the former. Pope Gregory II entered fully into his plans, changed his Saxon name into the Latin of Bonifacius, i.e. a man of good deeds, and officially appointed him a "Roman missionary" of the Gospel. Boniface next travelled to Gaul and enlisted the sympathy and support of Charles Martel: only then did he deem himself equipped for his life's work.

Space will not allow us to follow Boniface in his apostolic labours step by step. His arrival in the mission field coincided with the period when the various Teutonic tribes were crystallizing into nationalities, and it became the task of Boniface and his missionary monks and nuns to help the young nations to shape themselves into civilized societies based on Christian principles. For over two years Boniface worked in Friesland under the Englishman St. Willibrord. On a second visit to Rome in 725 his field of labour was indefinitely extended by his consecration as "Bishop of Germany". In 731 he received the

\* *The Making of Europe*. 1932, pp. 210-11.

Pallium from Pope Gregory III. He was in Rome for the third time in 738, whence he returned to Germany as Legate of the Holy See. Meanwhile, besides evangelizing Hesse and Saxony, he had consolidated Christianity in the half-converted lands of Bavaria, Thuringia and Franconia (Germania Franca), had reorganized the Church in the fully Christian districts of the Frankish Kingdoms and had established the German Hierarchy, much as it has remained to the present day.

To achieve all this Boniface secured the services of a devoted band of helpers, English and German, monks and nuns. He grouped them in communities which served as centres whence the light and practice of the Gospel radiated throughout the land. During the thirty-four years of his missionary career (720-754) Boniface led this Christian *corps d'élite* with consummate generalship along a path of well-nigh uninterrupted conquest. Of all the monastic centres established by Boniface the most important was the abbey of Fulda.

In the plans of St. Boniface, Fulda was to be the central stronghold of the Catholic Faith in the German lands. The almost contemporary narrative of its foundation reads like an epic. Boniface sends Sturmi, his favourite disciple and a native of Mainz, with two companions to look for a suitable site. They cross and re-cross the country from North to South, from East to West. They are attracted by the countryside round Hersfeld, but St. Boniface is loth to choose this on account of its vicinity to "cruel Saxony". Sturmi continues his quest.\*

Taking, therefore, a small provision for his journey, he commended himself to Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Then, quite alone he set out on his ass through the immense wilderness, and as he rode, an eager explorer, he kept a keen lookout on all sides, over the hill country and the plain, inspecting the mountains and the valleys, the springs, the streams and the torrents. And travelling thus he sang psalms, raising his mind to heaven and praying God with many a sigh. Where the fall of night compelled him to halt, there he rested. And wherever he spent the night he cut wood and built a fence around him for the protection of his ass, so that the wild beasts of which there were many, might not devour it. But as for himself, he signed the Cross of Christ in God's name on his forehead and slept free from care. . . .

One day he happened to come to the torrent which is to this day called Grezibach; and when he beheld the lie of the valley and the quality of the soil he tarried there for a while. Then he inspected the land all around, and came at last to the spot, blessed and prepared by God, where the sacred abbey

\* *Vita Sancti Sturmi auctore Sancto Eigilo*, P.L., T. 106, col. 426 sqq. The explorers set out in 742; that is why the foundation of Fulda is sometimes dated in that year.

now stands. . . and full of joy he understood that this place had been revealed to him by God through the prayers and merits of his Bishop Boniface.

St. Boniface hastens to ask for the grant of that land from Carloman, and soon

The Blessed Sturmi accompanied by seven brethren went back to the place where the monastery is now built . . . and there they endeavoured as best they could and with the toil of their own hands, to clear the forest by cutting down the trees, and thus to prepare for the building of the abbey . . . which from the name of the river that flowed near by was even then called Fulda.

Thus was born the great German abbey which was destined to be the spiritual centre of the Holy Roman Empire. The dreams of Boniface came true.

"To win the nations to the Catholic Faith," the Saint himself wrote to Lioba,\* "monasteries are more fitted than the ecclesiastical ministry."

St. Boniface neglected no effort to make of Fulda a model Benedictine Abbey. He appointed Sturmi its first abbot; but before taking up his office, the latter was sent by his master to the recently restored abbey of Monte Cassino, to study the Benedictine tradition at its fountain-head.

St. Boniface watched over his favourite abbey with fatherly care. That his heart was ever there, among his monastic children, is evident from the letters he wrote about this time. Here are a few extracts from one written by the Saint in 751 to Pope St. Zachary:†

. . . In the midst of the nations to whom we have preached there lies a woody spot surrounded by a vast wilderness. Here we have built a monastery and placed monks who live under the Rule of St. Benedict, men of strict observance, content with the labour of their own hands. The site in question we have acquired, for a just recompense, from pious God-fearing men, especially from Carloman, once Prince of the Franks, and we have dedicated it to Christ the Saviour. Into this monastery we propose, with the consent of Your Holiness, to retire for a while in order to restore this body of ours already overspent by age, and there to have it buried after death.

The Saint's desire to retire to Fulda was never fulfilled. Up to the last day of his life he was in the grip of what has been described as *la nostalgie de l'Apostolat*. On 5 June, 754, he died a martyr in Friesland, the first field of his apostolic labours. But

† *Vita Lioba*, in AA.SS., Sept., T. VII, p. 713.

\* P.L., T. 89, Ep. LXXV, col. 778.

his body was brought to Fulda, where it is still venerated by Christian Germany.

Cardinal Newman has a famous passage describing an ever-recurring phenomenon in Benedictine history:\*

Silent men were observed about the country or discovered in the forest digging, clearing, and building and other silent men, not seen, were sitting in the cold cloister, tiring their eyes and keeping their attention on the stretch, while they painfully deciphered and copied and re-copied the manuscripts they had saved. There was no one that "contended or cried out", or drew attention to what was going on; but by degrees the woody swamp became a hermitage, a religious house, a farm, an abbey, a village, a seminary, a school of learning, and a city. Roads and bridges connected it with other abbeys and cities which had similarly grown up; and what the haughty Alaric or fierce Totila had broken to pieces, these patient meditative men had brought together and made to live again.

In the whole range of monastic history there is, we think, no better illustration of the above passage from Fulda. St. Sturmi lived up to the expectations of his great teacher. His missionary labours were somewhat handicapped by the interference of St. Lullus, bishop of Mainz, who succeeded in removing Sturmi from the abbey for a time. At Fulda itself Sturmi founded and directed a school which became famous throughout Christendom and when he died in 779 he had four hundred monks under his rule.

Sturmi was succeeded by Abbot Bangulf (780-802). Under him the school of Fulda continued to develop and such was its importance that in 787 when Charlemagne, with the collaboration of Alcuin, issued the famous ordinance known as the *Epistola de Litteris Colendis*,† requiring the erection of schools in monasteries and episcopal sees, he addressed it to Bangulf, with the instruction that it should be sent to all the bishops and abbots of the Germanies. This letter, which has been styled the Charter of Education, gave a new impetus to the academic life of Fulda, where the monks directed a monastic school for the boy-monks within the cloister and another for lay students just beyond the monastery precincts.

After Bangulf's death in 802, a monk of pronounced authoritarian disposition, Ratgar by name, was appointed abbot. His high-handed ways soon caused a number of internal troubles in the community, and in 811 twenty heads of complaint were

\* Cardinal Newman on the Benedictine Order, edited by Dom Norbert Birt, O.S.B., 1914, p. 68.

† The *Epistola* may be found in Pl., T. 98, col. 895.

lodged against him with the Emperor. The abbot was accused particularly of harshness towards the monks and of neglect of established customs. He deprived all the monks, including the headmaster Rabanus Maurus, of their books and sent them to work on the monastery buildings, even on festival days. Ratgar was deposed and the gentle St. Eigel was appointed in his stead. He ruled the abbey until the year 822 and was succeeded by the greatest abbot of Fulda, St. Rabanus Maurus.

Rabanus, born at Mainz in 776, entered Fulda as a child of six or seven. After a thorough grounding at the abbey school, he was sent in 800 by Abbot Bangulf to Tours to finish his education under Alcuin. That great English Pedagogue conceived a deep affection for Rabanus, and it was he who gave him the name of Maurus, in honour of St. Benedict's favourite disciple—a name which Rabanus adopted permanently. On his return to Fulda, Rabanus was appointed headmaster and, except for the short interval when at Abbot Ratgar's command he had to exchange the pen for the hod, he spent the rest of his days writing and teaching, even after his elevation to the abbacy in 822. He was raised to the archbishopric of Mainz in 847 and died in 856.

Rabanus is Germany's Alcuin, the founder of German scholarship, the real *Praeceptor Germaniae*. Theologian, canonist, liturgist, pedagogue, biblical scholar, grammarian, poet, he left behind a name which became synonymous among the Germans for a learned man. For many a long day no higher praise could be bestowed on a scholar than to describe him as *doctus ut Rabanus*. In the pursuit of his exegetical studies he learned Greek from a native of Ephesus and mastered Hebrew and Syriac. As a poet he still speaks to us in the inspired strains of the *Veni Creator Spiritus* and in the hymns in honour of the Angels, still used in the Roman Breviary. Withal he was first and foremost a man of God, a true type of the Benedictine scholar of all times. He was the German counterpart of St. Bede the Venerable.\*

Needless to say, young monks from most of the other German abbeys were sent to Fulda to sit at the feet of Rabanus. We know the names of a few: Walafrid Strabo of Reichenau, Servatus Lupus of Ferrières, Ruthard of Hirschau, Ottfried of Weissenburg, the first German national poet, Werimbert, Engelbert and Harmuot of St. Gall..† We still have the works of several other learned monks of Fulda belonging to this period: Candidus Brun (d. 845), author of a treatise on our

\* His works are published in volumes 97-102 of Migne, P.L.

† Cf. Dom Ziegelbauer, *Hist. rei literariae O.S.B.*, Parts I, cap. II—*De Schola Fuldensi*, p. 203 sqq.

Lord's Passion; Haymo (*d.* 853) fellow-student of Rabanus Maurus under Alcuin, then abbot of Hersfeld and in 840 bishop of Halberstadt in Saxony; Freculf (*d.* 853), who died bishop of Lisieux in Normandy, writer of a *Chronicon*; Rudolph, confessor and chaplain of the Emperor Louis the Pious, painter and historian; and the unfortunate Gottschalk, monk first of Fulda and then of Orbais. Among the contemporary lay-students who became famous in after life we may cite Einhard (*d.* 840), Charlemagne's private secretary, architect, mathematician and historian, and Bernhard, King of Italy. Fulda also now became the cradle of German art\* and of German as a literary language: Rabanus Maurus himself compiled a *Glossaria Latino-Theodisca*, the first attempt at a German dictionary, while Ottfried of Weissenburg, mentioned above, was the first to write sacred poems in German.

With the close of the ninth century ends also Fulda's heroic period of spectacular achievement. With the beginning of the tenth century the abbey enters upon a period of quiet, silent efficiency and of material growth and prosperity. Fulda becomes a township and a city under the rule of the abbot. The abbey owned large estates or agricultural colonies in Thuringia, Hesse, Saxony, Swabia, Bavaria, the Rhineland and Lorraine, many of which eventually developed into large towns. The buildings of the abbey were enlarged and became famous for their architecture and artistic decorations.

As an ecclesiastical dignitary the abbot of Fulda continued to grow in importance. In 968 he was granted by Pope John XIII the title of Primate of the Benedictines in Germany and Gaul,† and in 999 he was invested with the right of convening monastic synods in Germany. We get some idea of the outstanding position of the abbey of Fulda in ecclesiastical Germany when we remember the grandeur achieved at this time by other abbeys of Germany and France: Corbie, Corvey, Cluny, Fleury, St. Denis, St. Gall, St. Emmeran, Salzburg, Reichenau, Prüm, Orbais. The Emperor St. Henry II (1002–1024) endeavoured to bring Fulda within the orbit of the Cluniac revival, but his efforts did not meet with success. Nor is this to be wondered at, for it is very questionable whether Fulda was at this time in need of reform. It was not what it had been, it is true; but it was still vigorous and in good spiritual condition.

\* See Swartwout, *The Monastic Craftsman*, Cambridge, 1932, p. 34.

† See Dom Bruno Albers, O.S.B., *L'Abbé de Fulda*, in *Révue Bénédictine*, 1900, pp. 152–161.

The ecclesiastical privileges and prerogatives of Fulda were accompanied by equally numerous civil and social distinctions. The Emperor Otto I named the abbot arch-chancellor of the Empress, with the right, jointly with the elector of Mainz, of crowning her. In the twelfth century he became a prince of the Empire, and in 1184 he was given the privilege of occupying the first seat on the Emperor's left.

No wonder that, from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries, the abbey of Fulda became the coveted prize of ambitious churchmen belonging to the German nobility. Indeed, little by little, all the seats in the monastic chapter, as well as most official positions of the community, were monopolized by monks from families which could produce their titles of nobility for the past four or five generations. It was not long before the monastic dictum came true:

*Cum porta sinistra ingreditur nobilitas  
porta dextera egreditur sanctitas.*

The trouble lay not so much in the fact that monks from the nobility held those offices as that most of them entered the abbey *porta sinistra*, by the back door, that is to say, they aspired first and foremost of the office and very little, or not at all, to sanctity. Thus the abbey became exclusively a monastery for the nobility, *monasterium nobilium*. It was, moreover, one of the four Imperial abbeys, *monasterium imperiale*.

The result was that the chapter of monks gradually became almost independent of the abbot, who lost practically all say in the government of the abbey. Another result was that in the conflict between the Emperors and the Popes which afflicted Germany from the second half of the eleventh century, Fulda, together with the other imperial abbeys, usually sided with the Emperor. Another factor which affected very adversely the monastic discipline of Fulda were the everlasting quarrels between the monastery and the see of Mainz, quarrels which often gave rise to armed conflict. Such troubles were unfortunately common enough in the later Middle Ages, and, it is interesting to note, that through them all Fulda continued to be venerated as the cradle and centre of Christian unity in Germany.

During the régime of Abbot John III von Henneberg (1521-1541) the chapter of Fulda became infected with Protestantism. Fortunately for the cause of the old Religion, a distinguished Catholic was raised to the abbacy in 1570 in the person of

Balthasar von Dermbach (1570-1606).<sup>\*</sup> He was an abbot of full stature, worthy of his predecessors of the eighth and ninth centuries. Only two years after his appointment he succeeded in bringing the Jesuits to Fulda, where he built a College for them. Dom Bucelin, a monastic chronicler of the following century, writes:<sup>†</sup>

Year 1572. Again the Jesuit Fathers are indebted to our monks for much help; especially to Balthasar, Prince-Abbot of Fulda, remembered to this day as a Saint, who called them to Fulda, where they were received with great favour and joy both by himself and by the Chapter, a magnificent College being built and handed over to them. From this time, with the help of the Jesuit Fathers, he directed all his efforts to the overthrow of heresy.

The Provincial of the German Jesuits was at this time St. Peter Canisius, who became a life-long friend of the Prince-Abbot. The zeal of the latter, however, cost him his abbatial office and a prolonged exile (1576-1602). The heretical element in the chapter schemed with such success that eventually their campaign of calumny brought about his removal from Fulda. In his life of St. Peter Canisius, Fr. Brodrick, S.J., refers to the tragic fate of the Society's good friend, the Benedictine abbot of Fulda,<sup>‡</sup> and again to

the case of the Prince Abbot of Fulda who, because he loved and fostered the Jesuits in his dominions, had been driven into exile and deprived of his dignity and possessions.<sup>§</sup>

But even in exile Abbot Balthasar managed to work for the Catholic cause and in 1584 a seminary was founded at Fulda and placed under the direction of the Jesuits. When in 1602 the Abbot, vindicated and triumphant, returned to Fulda, he received a congratulatory letter from Clement VIII, in which the Pope writes:<sup>||</sup>

We commend with no uncertain words your zeal in the pastoral office, your efforts to spread the Catholic Faith and your labours, under the guidance of divine grace, to win souls for Christ.

Thus at a time of grave danger for the Catholic Faith, a successor of St. Boniface at Fulda rose to the full height of his

\* For the life of this great abbot see Dom Gabriel Bucelin, in *Benedictus Redivivus*, 1679, ad annum D. 1572, 1578, 1584, 1602, 1604, 1606.

<sup>†</sup> Op. cit., ad an. 1572.

<sup>‡</sup> Ibid.

<sup>†</sup> J. Brodrick, *St. Peter Canisius*, 1935, p. 742.

<sup>||</sup> Dom Bucelin, op. cit., p. 151.

responsibility and was instrumental in placing a barrier to the advance of heresy.

However, evil days for Fulda still lay ahead. In 1631, the abbey was given in fief to Protestant Sweden and Protestantism once more threatened to get the upper hand; but after the battle of Nördlingen the abbey again enjoyed peace and prosperity. It was during this period that the present Renaissance cathedral was built by the Prince-Abbot Adalbert von Schleifras (1704-1712). In 1733, under the Prince-Abbot Adolf von Dalberg, the Benedictine and Jesuit colleges were amalgamated and raised to the status of a university, named, after the founder, the *Accademia Adolphiana*. Everything is Baroque at this period, even the Abbot's style, which ran as follows: *Celsissimus Amplissimus ac Reverendissimus Dominus Sacri Romani Imperii Princeps Adolphus ex Gente Dalbergica imperialis abbatiae Sanctissimi Salvatoris ad Fuldam Dominus et Abbas!*

On 5 October, 1752, the abbey was raised by Pope Benedict XIV to the rank of a bishopric, retaining, however, its former monastic character and organization. The end came in 1802. The abbey was secularized and presented to one of the German Princes to be held as a secular principality. The diocese of Fulda, comprising at this time a population of 100,000, after a series of painful vicissitudes, was re-established in 1829, under the full control of the secular Clergy.

During the past half-century Fulda has been the yearly meeting-place of the German episcopate who are proud to sign their resolutions for the welfare of the German Catholics "by the tomb of St. Boniface, the Apostle of Germany". Fulda still remains an inspiration and a symbol of their Faith for the Christians of Germany and for the descendants of the German emigrants overseas, particularly in the United States of America. We may fittingly pray, in this centenary year of the foundation of the historic Abbey, that the arts of peace, taught by St. Boniface to his spiritual children, may flourish once more in the land of his adoption.

ROMANUS RIOS, O.S.B.

## DANTE—HIS FRIENDS AND ENEMIES

## (II) THE YEARS OF EXILE

“Ce monde

Où chacun commodément trouve sa place, et dont je suis exclu.”—(CLAUDEL:  
*Ode Jubilaire pour le six-centième anniversaire de la Naissance de Dante.*)

“**T**RULY,” wrote Dante in his *Convivio*, in the early years of his exile, “I have been a ship without sails and without rudder, driven to divers ports and gulfs and shores by the dry wind that blows from dolorous poverty.” He had learned, by harsh experience, how few will hold the vanquished free from guilt; his outlawry was a stigma, through which all his work was held of less account, “both that which is done, and that which is yet to do”.\* In Florence he had started upon his “Divine Comedy”, but he believed the manuscript lost for ever. We find him beginning one book after another,† as though in urgent need to produce something—since his *Vita Nuova* and his poems did not suffice—that would give him a recognized status in a world of strangers.

Already his wanderings had carried him “to almost every part to which our tongue extends”, and we may read something of his experiences with the petty tyrants he had to serve where he speaks of “some lords of such asinine nature that they order the contrary of what they wish; and others who without speaking wish to be served and understood; and others who do not want their servant to make a movement towards fulfilling his office unless they order it”. Of these, adds Dante, his imperious temper unabated, it is sufficient to say in general that they are “like beasts, for to them their reason is of little use”. Perilously sincere,‡ incapable of flattery, merciless in judgment, it is not surprising to find him, in Rossetti’s words, “arriving only to depart”.§

\* *Convivio*, Bk. I, Ch. III.

† *De Vulgare Eloquio* must have been written about 1304, the *Convivio* a year or so later, and both remain unfinished.

‡ In the “Divine Comedy” (*Purg.*, XXI, 106) he admits his inability to conceal either grief or amusement, since smiles and tears “in the most truthful least obey the will”.

§ In the lovely poem, *Dante at Verona*.

Arriving only to depart  
From court to court, from land to land,  
Like flame within the naked hand  
His body bore his burning heart,  
Which still on Florence longed to bring  
God’s fire, for his burnt offering.

Of the lonely misery and humiliation he endured he has left glimpses in the "Divine Comedy". We see his own figure flash as from mirroring water in the picture of Provenzan Salvani, who, forced to beg, though it was for a friend's ransom, "brought himself to tremble in every vein",\* when Oderisi of Gubbio, who tells the tale, adds in forewarning:

I say no more, darkly I speak I know,  
But short the time before your neighbours will  
So act that you will see how this was so.

Or again in that of Romeo, the unjustly disgraced Chancellor of the Count of Provence:

And if the world could know what heart he bore,  
Morsel by morsel forced to beg his way,  
Much though it praise him, it would praise him more.†

And in the *Paradiso* there is the famous passage, in which he makes his ancestor the Crusader Cacciaguida speak to him as in prophecy of the sorrows awaiting him:

And thou shalt leave all things to thee most dear . . .  
And thou shalt know how salt another's bread,  
how hard and steep the going for the feet  
that ever on another's stairs must tread.‡

"All things to thee most dear". They included his small children, and his wife whom he would never see again,§ and the fellowship of friends. "It so rarely chances that an exile finds friends", he would write, when his banishment had lasted nearly fifteen years, to a Florentine priest who sought to promote his recall, and though he indignantly rejects the humiliating conditions on which such recall might become possible, he shows touching gratitude to those who still have his return at heart.

Those friends he found, he treasured. Of such was Bartolomeo della Scala, the Lord of Verona, his "first refuge"; him Dante would remember in his *Paradiso* as "the great Lombard", passionately grateful to him as to one who freely offered

\* *Purg.*, XI, 138.

† *Par.*, VI, 140–142.

‡ *Par.*, XVII, 58–60.

§ There is no reason to suppose, as Boccaccio and other biographers have done, that this was a result of disagreement between them. He had no means of supporting a family. By remaining in Florence she was able to recover the amount of her dowry (though even this she had to eke out by needlework), and Corso Donati, though ruthless in sweeping away those who stood in his path, could be trusted to give some protection to his kinswoman. When she might have joined Dante, at Ravenna, towards the end of his life, too many years had passed, and she probably felt too old to begin a new life in strange surroundings. He for his part would have grown accustomed to thinking of her in Florence, part of the life to which he longed and increasingly hoped to return.

the help for which others had to be besought. But Bartolommeo died in 1304, to be succeeded by his brother Alboino between whom and Dante there seems to have been no such liking; his second brother, Cane, whom Dante was one day to honour above all men, was a boy of thirteen, but since we know that Dante loved children, it is possible that the seeds of that later friendship were already sown.

For a time Dante was at Bologna, where he had studied in his youth. Then that city, making alliance with Florence, expelled the White exiles. In 1305 he is believed to have been in Padua, solaced by the company of Giotto, who was painting his immortal frescoes in the Scrovegni chapel. Cino of Pistoia wrote to him in loyal affection. Cino himself was an exile, had been so for some years, but on the other side; the Black and White factions of Florence extended to Pistoia (where indeed they originated) and Pistoia was still in the hands of the Whites. Cino was a Black, but Dante had written a beautiful letter to console him, quoting the Gospel, "if you were of the world, the world would love its own". And on receipt of a sonnet in which Dante explains a long silence by the depression brought by the "evil place" in which he finds himself,\* Cino replies in a lovely sonnet exhorting him:

Beloved brother mine, enwound in pain,  
cease not to sing, if but thy faith remain. †

Through Cino he would find another refuge, to be remembered in a passion of gratitude, with the great Malaspina family in the Lunigiana, where, in May 1306 (the first sure date of his exile), he acted as representative of the three Marquises in settling a long-standing dispute with the Bishop of Luni. Of the Marquis of Villafranca we know little. Franceschino Malaspina of Mulazzo was of Ghibelline sympathies, like the other lords to whom Dante had been driven by exile, and his reception of a White was natural. (At Mulazzo there is a little house below the castle, overlooking the valley, from which, the peasants today will tell you, Dante used "to contemplate the stars".) But Dante, while honouring the whole house, felt his deepest debt to its head, Moroello, whose gaunt castle of Giovagallo rises out of the steep chestnut woods, dominating the Gulf of Spezia, and Moroello was a hard-bitten warrior, Captain of the Guelf troops in the service of the Blacks of Florence. The friendship between him and Dante has therefore puzzled bio-

\* *Poich'io non trovo chi meco ragioni.*

† In "Dante non odo in che albergo suoni . . ."

graphers; its explanation must lie in terms of personal character. Moroello stood for the old feudal chivalry at its best, loyal, fearless, open-handed, with a soldier's simplicity and at the same time with an appreciation of poets and their works which was traditional in his family. French troubadours had sung the praises of Malaspina hospitality. Moroello, Cino and Dante now exchange sonnets, Dante writing on Moroello's behalf.\*

It was now that in Florence one of Dante's nephews, with young Dino Perini, whom we shall meet later, discovered the first cantos of the "Divine Comedy" in a chest which Dante's wife had entrusted for safe-keeping to the monastery across the street. They took them to Dino Frescobaldi, by then the most famous poet in Florence, and he, knowing that if Dante was to finish a work of such magnitude someone must make it materially possible for him to do so, sent them to Moroello in the certainty that he would understand their worth, begging him to persuade Dante to bring his poem to completion.

There is a letter from Dante to Moroello in which he speaks of sighing for his court in which he was "free to follow the offices of liberty". Yet his restless spirit had not allowed him to remain. He writes from the Casentino, whither a great rally of the Whites, led by a Cardinal Legate and with serious hope of triumph, had summoned him only to renewed disillusion. To this mountain valley through which the Arno flows, the scene of the battle of Campaldino in his youth, so near to Florence that its towers may be seen on clear evenings from the head of the pass, he had come before and was to come again, staying in one or the other of its precipitous hill castles. He shows himself sensitive to the beauty of the place, but his hosts, of the Florentine family of the Conti Guidi, seem to have inspired him with no deep regard.†

It is probable that from the Casentino he went to Lucca, a city recalled where in Purgatory the soul of Bonagiunta the poet murmurs the name "Gentucca", adding:

A lady there, who is not yet a wife  
will make that city seem a pleasant place.‡

\* If Valli's theory of the *Fedeli d'Amore* is accepted, Moroello must be counted as of their number. This would throw a little light of the obscurities of this poetic correspondence, which is written in what the late Professor Wicksteed called "a private language".

† Boccaccio speaks of him as befriended by Count Selvatico of Pratovecchio, among the Arno meadows. Dante's letter to Moroello, the poem he calls his "little mountainy song" and, if they are to be attributed to his exile, the *rime pietrose*, were written there, and imply that there he fell passionately in love with a lady. But in view of his insistence in the *Convivio* that the apparent love poems of his maturity must be read for an allegorical sense, the fact remains uncertain.

‡ *Purg.*, XXIV, 43–46.

The manner of her mention suggests a desire to recall some delicate act of friendship out of the common. Now early in 1309 a recently discovered document has proved the presence in Lucca of Dante's eldest son Giovanni, who by Florentine law was doomed to share his father's exile as soon as he was fourteen. It is not likely that Dante, with his strong sense of family affection\* would not have hastened to join him, and it is not fanciful to imagine him in joy at finding the boy, in great grief when too soon he was forced to leave him. For in the same year, Lucca, on a demand from Florence, agreed to expel the Florentine exiles who had taken refuge there. It is probable that Giovanni, being so young, was able to remain, and it has been suggested that Dante's commemoration of Gentucca was in thanks for kindness shown to his son.

Of Giovanni nothing more is heard.<sup>†</sup> When on the coming of the Emperor Henry, Dante's letter bidding his fellow-exiles "Forgive, forgive, oh you most dear, who like myself have suffered wrong", is followed in February 1311 by a terrible letter to "the most infamous Florentines", exulting in threats of destruction to his city, one has the impression that his disillusionment in finding Florence the centre of resistance to one in whom he sees the hope of an anguished world is sharpened and poisoned by some intimate agony. Giovanni must have been dead by the time his brothers joined Dante some six years later, or trace of him could hardly have been completely lost. If he died at this moment, it would explain Dante's bitter wrath against the city that had driven the boy to death in exile. And we may divine an echo of his grief in his passionate indignation against the Pisans, who allowed Count Ugolino's sons to perish with their father; when he cries that it would be well could the Arno rise and drown every living soul in punishment for such cruelty:

Even if Ugolino, traitrously,  
was said to sell your castles, do you wrong,  
his sons should have been spared such agony,  
For they must needs be innocent, being young . . . ‡

\* Witness how he gathered his children round him at the end of his life, and also, in his youth, the affection between him and his step-sister Tana shown in the *Vita Nuova*; he seems to have won the loyalty of his step-brother also, who calls his own son after him and in 1304 contracted a loan at Arezzo when Dante was in exile there, a fact that suggests he was coming to his brother's help.

† His very existence was unsuspected till the discovery of the document above-mentioned. Though, knowing that Dante's other two sons were named Peter and James, it was natural to look for a John.

‡ *Inf.*, XXXIII, 85-88. The vehemence of Dante's imprecation against Pisa would of itself suggest that he was moved by something more than a story that had stirred him. It is in such oblique reflections only that we find traces of events that

The years between 1310 and 1313 saw Dante's hopes at their highest, and then irremediably shattered. In Milan he paid his fervent homage to the Emperor, an Emperor such as he had dreamed of, seeking peace and justice and an end to faction. He may have gone there in Moroello's suite, for Moroello, contrary to all expectations and in spite of exhortations from Florence, rallied to Henry and remained faithful to the end. In the spring of 1312 Dante was back in the Casentino, seeking to recall its lords, who were Counts Palatine, to their imperial allegiance. At Porciaro, on a bleak pinnacle in the mountains, Count Tancredi would have betrayed him to the Florentines. The peasants of the district still tell how Dante, leaving in haste, met the Florentine troops coming to take him, and to the question: "Is Dante Alighieri still at Porciaro?" replied (like St. Athanasius in like case), "He was there when I left!" and passed on.

The following winter the Emperor was first at Genoa, then at Pisa. Dante must have followed him, for it must have been now at Pisa that he met with a fellow exile, with whom he had been on friendly terms—a lawyer, Ser Petracco, who pointed him out to his small boy Francesco. Francesco, finding the name Petracco inharmonious, was one day to change it for the immortal one of Petrarch.

With Henry's death in 1313 many hopes were shattered. Dino Compagni's history stops short; he had no heart to carry it to the final tragedy. Cino voiced his grief in a fine elegy. But of Dante the utter and heart-breaking despair can be surmised only from his silence and his bitter anger against those who were Henry's enemies. One day he too would write an epitaph for the man he honoured to a point near worship; it would be in the *Paradiso*, a vision of a throne prepared for him in Empyreal heaven. The memory of his high enterprise and its failure haunts the whole of the "Divine Comedy."

We do not know where Dante was when Henry died, nor, with any certainty, what became of him for some years. It is believed that he withdrew to the lonely monastery of Fonte Avellana, immersing himself in his *Inferno*; that for a time he was again in Pisa, protected by its new lord, Ugccione della Faggiuola, one of the Emperor's most stalwart supports, a gigantic, red-bearded man of war, whose weapons no one else

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touched him most nearly where they had no public resonance. Much as he reveals of himself in the "Divine Comedy" there was in him a core of reserve that made him very reticent in speaking of matters intimately private to him. Thus he will mention his great-grandfather and grandfather, but the only sign he gives of his feeling for his parents is in the poignant lines in the *Paradiso* (XIV, 61–66), where the souls of the blessed long for the resurrection, not so much for their own sakes, but that they may look on the faces of their mothers and fathers and "the others who were dear".

could wield, fascinating in conversation and a lover of men of parts. It is to Ugccione that Fra Ilario's famous letter is addressed, purporting to convey to him the dedication of the *Inferno*, with the manuscript itself, on Dante's behalf. All the difficulties in accepting it as authentic disappear if we place it, and Dante's journey to France of which it speaks, about this date.\* It tells how Dante came a stranger to the monastery of Monte Corvo on the Lunigiana coast; Fra Ilaro asked him what he wished, "And as he did not answer, but stood looking at the building, I asked him again what he sought. Then he, after looking at me and at my brethren, answered, 'Peace'. Then was I all the more kindled with desire to know him, who he was and of what condition, and I drew him aside and when I had spoken with him, I knew who he was." Before he left, says Ilaro, Dante entrusted him with his *Inferno*, asking him to send it to Ugccione with such commentary as he might think fit to add to it. It has been declared improbable that Dante would have shown such trust in a stranger, but there are such sudden friendships, born of intuitive recognition, and if Fra Ilaro's letter is genuine, he can have been no common man.

With this hunger for peace, to which so much in his work testifies, Dante will have left Ugccione, who, with the remains of Henry's troops, was preparing to lead a Ghibelline army against Florence. Almost certainly, the exile would turn once more to Moroello, above all now that the disappearance of political dissent had removed all barriers to their intimacy. From Moroello's newly acquired castle of Fosdinovo (where a little L-shaped room is shown as that in which Dante slept) to Monte Corvo is but a few miles.† To Moroello, says Fra Ilaro, and Boccaccio echoes him, the *Purgatorio* was to be dedicated, in which Dante gives such magnificent praise to the Malaspina house for its prowess and liberality, with remembrance, too, of Moroello's wife, "the good Alagia", who is shown as saving the soul of her uncle Pope Adrian by her prayers.

Moroello and his family had great influence in France. It could well be, one might almost say must have been, through his help that Dante was able to go to Paris to pursue the theological

\* Boccaccio says that Dante's journey to Paris took place before the Emperor's coming, but Boccaccio is unreliable for sequence of events. The letter was thought to be his invention (since he draws from it), till a copy of it was discovered in a manuscript written within a few years of Dante's death.

† It would be natural for Dante, staying under Moroello's roof, to seek such a messenger as the monastery could provide to carry his book to Ugccione. Moroello remained a Guelph, and his household would have no communication with the Ghibelline leader, now that the old conflict between Guelph and Ghibelline had broken out anew.

studies essential to his poem, and from which otherwise his penniless state would have debarred him. He may well have gone there the year after Henry's death, when all trace of him in Italy is lost.

Moroello Dante did not see again; he died in 1315. In that year Ugccione, with reinforcements from Can Grande of Verona and the Ghibellines of Lombardy, won a crushing victory over Florence and the whole Guelph League. It has been assumed that Dante would then have been with him, eagerly waiting for the fall of his city. It is unlikely. Two years before he had waited in an agony of expectation for Florence to fall to Henry; he would shrink from renewal of that experience. Then, his loyalty to Florence swallowed up in loyalty to its overlord, believing in Henry as one with a sacred mission, he had urged him to the attack in a letter of appalling violence, and even so, at the last moment he could not bring himself to join the besieging armies. Now there was no high cause at stake, only the old rivalry between Guelph and Ghibelline, hateful to Dante as it had been to Henry himself.\* Had Dante been associated with Ugccione at this time his friends in Florence would not that very year have hoped for his inclusion in an amnesty, even at a humiliating cost, and Dante would not have replied as he did: "Not thus the road of my return to my city. But if any other be found . . . unhurtful to Dante's honour and fair fame, that will I take with no slow footsteps. But if no such road leads back to Florence, then to Florence will I never return. Can I not everywhere contemplate the sun and stars? Can I not speculate on most sweet truths under every sky, without first making myself inglorious, a thing of shame to my fellow-citizens? Nor will bread be lacking me."

When Dante is next heard of, it is at Verona, whither he was drawn by the fame of young Can Grande, chief of the Ghibellines of Northern Italy. If Moroello Malaspina seems to stand for the old feudal lord, Cane's court has already a renaissance savour. Brilliant, generous, adventurous, fearless in battle, magnanimous to the vanquished, with a smile that was famous throughout Lombardy, Cane loved to surround himself with gifted men, and distinguished exiles were sure of his welcome.

\* Since many of Dante's biographers, from Boccaccio onwards, misunderstanding his devotion to the imperial idea, have represented him as an impassioned Ghibelline, it is well to recall his lines in the *Paradiso* (VI, 103–106), speaking of the imperial eagle:

Then let the Ghibellines pursue their schemes  
with other banner, he serves unworthily  
who separable it from justice deems.

For soldiers the rooms he prepared were frescoed with pictures of Mars and battle scenes; for musicians, with Orpheus; for poets, with the nine Muses; and to all were allotted minstrels and servants to wait on them. There Dante will have met with other friends—Uguccione, who in the spring of 1316, by a turn of Fortune's wheel, was driven out of his Lordship, and became Cane's chief lieutenant till his death; Guido di Castello, an impoverished exile like himself whom he had praised in the *Convivio*, saying that no one in their senses would consider Alboino, the reigning prince of Verona, as noble as he (a compliment Alboino will hardly have appreciated!); and also, a fascinating and mysterious figure in Dante's circle of friends, Immanuel Ben Solomon, known as Manuel the Jew. Immanuel had been the head of the Jewish Community in Rome, where he and Dante may first have met. He was a pupil of the famous Rabbi Leo, who translated St. Thomas Aquinas into Hebrew and taught Hebrew to King Robert of Sicily; physician by profession, philosopher and kabbalist, he wrote comic verse in Italian and rhymed prose in Hebrew with an effect which (at least in the late Israel Gollancz' translation) has a disconcerting resemblance to that obtained by Wilhelmina Stitch. In the course of time his independence of mind had made his orthodoxy suspect among the Jews of Rome. Fantastically generous, he pledged his whole fortune to save a bankrupt friend and lost it; placed by his ruin at the mercy of his enemies, he was driven into exile, and Verona became a favourite resting-place in the course of his wanderings. That his friendship for Dante was well known is proved by sonnets exchanged between him and Bosone, the lord of Gubbio, consoling each other after Dante's death (Dante at some period of his exile had acted as tutor to Bosone's sons), and others between Bosone and an obscure poet when Manuel was dead in his turn. "The Jew has gone to join his Dante in Hell," wrote the other amiably, and Bosone retorted that Manuel was with Dante surely, but in Purgatory. Manuel was to write a Divine Comedy of his own, in which he is led through the realms of the other world by one Daniel, who is not so plainly the prophet as not to make it tempting (and plausible) to suppose him Dante himself. Manuel's Paradise includes the just of all beliefs, and he holds that "when two have once been bound in life by the bond of love and friendship, no power shall separate their souls for ever". One might compare Dante's persistent anxiety about the salvation of the non-Christian just (though in this he is partly concerned with his beloved Virgil). And where in the *Paradiso* he writes bitterly about Christians who behave "so that the Jew amid them laughs at them", it is more than possible, given his concrete turn

of mind,\* that he was thinking not in general terms but of the ironical mockery characteristic of his friend Manuel.

To Dante, Can Grande gave munificent welcome; he seems to have had the rare quality of recognizing greatness when he encountered it. It was said that after a time he tired of him and treated him with less honour. Tales are told of childish tricks played on the exile and of biting retorts on Dante's part—as when, for instance, Cane asked him how it was that a buffoon with his folly could make himself more popular than he, with all his wisdom. Biographers have been puzzled to reconcile such stories with Dante's fervent praise of Cane in the *Paradiso*, with its dedication to him and the fact that to Cane Dante would later send his poem, bit by bit, before it could be read by any other. And yet, between a young tyrant, surrounded by adulation from his childhood and Dante, disdainful of the arts of courtiership, there were bound to be moments of tension, in which Cane would take a perverse delight in seeking to humiliate a man in whom he inwardly recognized his master. He was in his twenties; on his statue his face is that of a puckish goblin, and to his pranks Dante extended the indulgence of wise age to capricious youth, seeing in him the high promise of which all his contemporaries speak. The time would come when Dante would weary of Verona, of the continual festivities and concourse of people which Manuel so graphically describes,† of the no less continual echoes of the warfare by which Cane was making himself master of half Lombardy, and of the web of intrigues and jealousies inevitable in such a court, but Cane he loved. "Your friendship," he would write to him from Ravenna, "I cherish as my greatest treasure." And lest anyone shall consider him presumptuous in claiming friendship with so great a prince, he justifies himself, characteristically if rather overwhelmingly, "Why not? Since even the friendship of God and man is in no wise hindered by disparity."

It must have been about 1317 he left Verona seeking the peace essential for his work, and came to marsh-girt Ravenna, golden

\* An example: where he speaks of "how salt another's bread", beneath the metaphor is literal truth. The bread of Tuscany is made without salt to this day, whereas almost everywhere else it is salted.

† Of people a sea

Lords of every degree  
From all countries that be . . .  
Men versed in theology,  
Some in astrology,  
French by the score  
Germans still more,  
Latins and Flemings and English galore . . .

(In *Bisbidis*.)

with memories of Goth and Greek and Romani. Boccaccio tells how its lord, Count Guido da Polenta, himself a poet and scholar, hearing Dante had come to Romagna (perhaps to Ferrara, where Giotto was painting), did not wait for him to ask his hospitality, but "with liberal heart, knowing the shame of men of worth in asking, came forward with his offer, asking of Dante as a special grace what he knew Dante must ask of him, that he might abide with him".

There Dante found the peace he sought. There he completed his *Purgatorio*, seeing in the divine forest of the Earthly Paradise the likeness of the stream-meshed pine forests of Ravenna, and there he wrote his *Paradiso*. His sons, Piero and Jacopo, were with him; they had probably been with him in Verona, for Cane was to assist them after Dante's death. Now another of his children was restored to him, his daughter Beatrice.

In 1319 a pedantic young professor, Giovanni del Virgilio, wrote to him from Bologna, in words of affectionate homage, but reproving him for using the vulgar tongue instead of scholars' Latin, and urging him to write a Latin epic that would entitle him to be crowned as poet in Bologna. Dante, who in the *Convivio* had written fiercely that those who deprecated the vulgar tongue deserved to be answered "not with arguments but with knives", dealt kindly with Del Virgilio, answering in a Latin Eclogue that reveals his keen humour and at the same time gives a charming glimpse of him in his lighter mood. Under pastoral metaphor he tells how, when Del Virgilio's letter was received, he and young Dino Perini were together. Dante was then teaching the art of poetry at the University, and Dino Perini seems to have been assisting him. Boccaccio knew him in later life and spoke of him as one who had been as close a friend of Dante as it was possible for a man to be. When Dino, who knows Giovanni Del Virgilio, begs to hear what he writes, Dante teases him, telling him that it is written in too lofty and learned a style to be understood by such as he, bidding him think rather of his own scholars, "in spite of scanty fare", chaffing him till, "vanquished by love for him", he tells him, and to his eager question tells him, too, his answer. It is his hope that the laurel crown of poetry will one day be conferred on him, for the sake of his divine poem (if Giovanni Del Virgilio, who scorns it because of its language, will graciously allow, and to convert him Dante sends him ten cantos of the *Paradiso*), and this—it is his dream—will be not in Bologna but in his own Florence.\*

It is surrounded by youth that we find Dante in these last years of his life. Besides his children and his beloved Dino,

\* See *Dante and Del Virgilio*, by Wicksteed and Gardner.

there were his pupils in Italian poetry, who included Count Guido and that Piero Giardini, who in middle life would bear firm witness to Boccaccio how Dante's spirit had appeared from beyond the grave to show where the lost conclusion of his *Paradiso* lay hidden; we know the names too of several young scholars from Bologna who came to pay him homage: Menghino Mengazzi, and Bernardo Cannacci, skilled in Latin verses, and Graziolo de' Bambaglioli, who would write one of the earliest commentaries to the "Divine Comedy". Nor were friends of riper age lacking. Giotto, probably through Dante's arranging, about 1320 came to Ravenna to paint, as he had come to Verona; we are justified in imagining he came for his old friend's sake. And in a second Eclogue, written in reply to a new poem from Giovanni Del Virgilio, a new figure appears, identified as Ser Fiducio de' Milotti, a physician of philosophic turn of mind, devoted to Dante like the rest, and urging him, with the anxiety of profound affection, not to go to Bologna, where his enemies would have him at their mercy; never, he says, would Count Guido allow him thus to imperil his life.

In Ravenna Dante had made enemies as well as friends: among the professors, who looked upon him as an interloper, since he held no academic title,\* and among others because of the passion with which he turned on any who questioned the justice of his Emperor's cause, but the hostility of such went no further than words. There were also the great families, members of whom he had exposed in the *Inferno*. In the *Paradiso* he shows how he was from the first conscious that, "robbed of the place most dear", if he offended too many notable men he would soon have no refuge left. But this doubt he dismissed as unworthy; old Cacciaguida bids him

tell the whole truth, and let them scratch who itch.†

It was fortunate that the Counts of Romena in the Casentino did not resent the damnation of their uncle as a forger, and that Count Guido of Ravenna himself was rather proud than otherwise that his aunt Francesca figured in one of the most famous episodes of the *Inferno*. But in Genoa at one time or other Dante had been set upon and beaten by men in the hire of Branca Doria, indignant to know that his soul was already committed to a traitor's hell. In Bologna the powerful family of the Caccianemici were still more eager for revenge. Bologna indeed, if it held many

\* According to a late but credible source, in Paris Dante had passed triumphantly the examinations necessary for the degree of Magister, but had not been able to afford the expensive ceremonial its conferment demanded.

† *Par.*, XVII, 106–142.

admirers of Dante, remained a centre of hostility towards him even after his death—fomented, in intellectual circles, by Cecco d'Ascoli once his friend.

Now in Ravenna itself, a subtle attempt was made to destroy him. It is told that one day after Mass in the Franciscan church, Fra Accorso the Inquisitor summoned him, asking, "Are you that Dante who says he has been in Hell and Purgatory?" and appointed a day when he would scrutinize his tenets more closely.

What passed between them cannot be known. It was the inquisition law that all preliminary inquiries should be kept secret, but Dante cannot have satisfied him as easily as legend relates. The Joachimist gleams in his work would arouse suspicion, especially when the *Paradiso* with its explicit dogmatic affirmations was not yet known. In the *Inferno* his figuration of Fortune as a goddess and his treatment of the suicides\* were thought to be so audacious that even his warmest champions made nervous excuses. Not only this, but dangerous rumours had gathered round his name. In 1317 he had paid a visit to Can Grande (partly in order to win his friendship for the Guelf state of Ravenna) in the course of which he was summoned to Piacenza by Cane's ally, Galeazzo Visconti of Milan. Probably Dante never knew the reason. But in an inquiry at the papal court of Avignon it appeared that what Galeazzo hoped from Dante was his help in a plot to kill the Pope by magic, only to decide after talking with him that he "could not reveal such business to him for a thousand florins". Pope John XXII had a pathological terror of such activities, and had ordered the Italian Inquisition to look for them with special zeal. The mention of Dante as a possible sorcerer—even though it was to exonerate him—would be remembered against him; when, three years after his death, Cardinal Bertrando del Poggetto, who had conducted the inquiry, came to Italy as papal Legate, he not only burned Dante's *De Monarchia* as heretical, but, had he not been prevented, would have disinterred and burned his bones.† Had the Inquisitor of Ravenna wished, he could have found grounds for proceeding against him, and by what rigorous examination he convinced himself of Dante's orthodoxy and integrity we cannot know. The fact is that he was so con-

\* With a reminiscence of Virgil, Dante transforms them into trees, as having thrown away their human semblance, and after the resurrection their bodies, unresumed, will hang on the branches.

† *De Monarchia* remained suspect of heresy and was on the Index of prohibited books till it was removed by Leo XIII. The official and total vindication of Dante's orthodoxy did not come till our own time, in the magnificent encyclical of Benedict XV in 1921, on the sexcentenary of his death.

vinced, and became Dante's firm friend and the author of one of the basic commentaries on the *Inferno*. It is possibly through his influence that we find a renewal of Franciscan inspiration towards the end of the *Paradiso*, blending with the predominant Thomism of the rest, and it is said to have been at his prompting that Dante inserted his explicit profession of faith (*Par.*, XXIV), to place his orthodoxy beyond all doubt.

Cocco d'Ascoli was left to murmur that Dante made up to the Franciscans because he was afraid of them. In 1328 he himself would be burned at the stake as astrologer and necromancer by this same Fra Accorso, and to a long list of charges is added that he had spoken evil of Dante Alighieri. I have been pleased to fancy (though this is unscholarly speculation) that Cocco had something to do with denouncing Dante to the Inquisition and that Fra Accorso remembered it against him. A tribute to friendship, but . . . *un peu trop de zèle!*\*

Thus secure, surrounded by affection, Dante could look upon his past and future with new tranquillity. In a sonnet to a poet friend in Venice, Giovanni del Quirico, he writes as one absorbed in thought of heavenly things;

The King who doth his faithful servants pay  
beyond all measure, so abundantly,  
leads me to put my bitter wrath away . . .

It must have been written at the same time as when in the *Paradiso* through Cacciaguida's prophecy, he looks back on the miseries through which he had come, and comforts himself with Beatrice's words:

Let such thoughts be, for think that here am I  
Nearby to him who righteth every wrong. . . .

He could forget those who had wronged him, and if there is a quiver of sarcasm in his last reference to Florence, his thoughts of his city are filled with an immense tenderness; he hopes to the last that his sacred poem shall win his homecoming "to that sweet fold, where as a lamb I slept". But those who had brought to nothing his threefold dream of a spiritualized Church, a free and peaceful Florence in an Italy united in peaceful amity, a united Christendom, he would not forgive. His condemnation of Boniface VIII, and of Clement, the "shepherd of still more evil works" who betrayed his Emperor, renewed on the very threshold of the supreme vision of the *Paradiso*, is the more terrible for being passionless.

BARBARA BARCLAY CARTER.

\* When the unfortunate Cocco was being led to execution he asked for some water, and a man in the crowd called out: "Don't give it him. If he is a sorcerer, he can jump into it and vanish!" What is curious is that there is a Welsh story of a sorcerer in a similar plight, who, when water was brought to him, did vanish into it.

## RON SARD

HERE arose in France, in the middle of the sixteenth century, a little band of young men who, after deliberation and study, set themselves the task of preparing and carrying out a literary revolution. The Italian Renaissance had been brought across the Alps by the returning French Armies, and had so powerfully affected the imagination of these men that they determined to use it to transform French poetry. They were scholars as well as poets, and not the least remarkable aspect of their adventure was the discipline they imposed on themselves, the laborious apprenticeship to which they subjected their enthusiasm for their discovery. Not only did they steep themselves in the Classics, but they considered every detail of their craft of poetry, reading and debating together, until the moment arrived for their ideas to be put into practice. They called themselves the Brigade, and afterwards, the Pleiad. Their experiment succeeded. They imprisoned the recently recovered passion for the Greek and Latin poets in a new French language, and they left a permanent mark on French literature. Their leader, the soul of the movement, was Ronsard. In his lifetime he himself was confident that his poetry was imperishable. He permitted himself no doubts in the matter, nor did he ever hesitate to tell the ladies to whom he paid court that by naming them in his songs he was conferring upon them immortality. Long before his death in 1585 he had been acclaimed throughout Europe as a master-poet. Yet the bibliographer will look in vain for a complete edition of his works between 1630 and 1857. For two hundred years he was neglected and almost forgotten, until Sainte-Beuve began the reinstatement, which made slow progress through the nineteenth century. Cary, the translator of Dante, called attention to him. Blanchefain edited a complete edition in eight volumes. Heredia saluted him in a sonnet. At the beginning of this century de Nolhac, Champion, Laumonier in France, and Saintsbury in England contributed to the revival. Humbert Wolfe translated the sonnets to Hélène. And the other day there appeared a full-length biography and critical appreciation of the poet by Mr. D. B. Wyndham Lewis,\* which is at once a scholarly contribution to the literature of Ronsard, and an *amende honorable* offered for the two centuries of neglect.

The artistic faith of Ronsard and his companions, what they had set out to achieve, and how they proposed to achieve it,

\* *Ronsard*. By W. B. Wyndham Lewis. (Sheed & Ward. 12s. 6d.)

may be studied in two prose works: Du Bellay's *La Défense et Illustration de la Langue Française*, published in 1549, and Ronsard's *L'Abrége de l'Art Poétique*, published in 1565. In this manifesto of the movement, which preceded the first published poems of the group, and in Ronsard's treatise, and his prefaces to his Odes and to his *Franciade*, will be found the elements of the system these men invented. The manifesto and the treatise can be taken together, as they were obviously both the outcome of discussions among the band of poets. Sainte-Beuve goes so far as to attribute the manifesto to Ronsard, and it is probable that Du Bellay took his leader's advice when he was composing it. Nothing would seem less likely than that good poetry should result from the debates of a kind of committee of theorists. That is not the way poems are produced. Yet that is how it happened, and the results are there for us to see. Behind the unfailing spontaneity of Ronsard was a mastery of his craft down to its smallest details. It was the vivacious Ronsard, in his treatise, who concerned himself principally with the technique of poetry, and the less ebullient Du Bellay who discussed more broadly the aims of the group. Both serve as a commentary on the poetry of the Pleiad.

In the first part of his manifesto Du Bellay defends the French language against its detractors, and calls on poets to make a better and a richer use of the tongue than they have made hitherto. This is to be achieved by prolonged study of the Classics, by taking them as models, and by adapting them to the needs of French poetry; but not by translating them, since no translation can ever convey adequately the full significance and beauty of the original, nor can it improve the French language. In the second part, he says frankly that his object is to create a new poetry for his country, with a higher and more noble style than that which has contented people for so long. With the popular style he is, like Ronsard, completely out of sympathy. Villon's name is not mentioned, when he writes of his forerunners. He says that only Guillaume de Loris and Jean de Meung are worthy of study—and they, not because there is anything in them for imitation, but because they give you an idea of what the venerable French language once was. A poet must be a scholar. Poets, he says, are not born. They are made. Inspiration by itself will achieve nothing lasting. First must come laborious days and nights, "Hunger and thirst and long vigils". Here one catches the voice of Ronsard, who had led this austere life (broken by pranks and escapades) in the room he shared with de Baif when they were fellow-students under Dorat at the Collège de Coqueret. The fourth chapter in this second part of the

manifesto is perhaps the most important for the student of the Pleiad. For here, having previously told poets what to read, he tells them what not to read, and what forms they should choose when they write. He would have them scorn what he calls *épiceries*—such verse-forms as ballades, rondeaux, virelais, chants-royaux, because they corrupt taste. Let them rather concern themselves with epigrams in the manner of Martial, with the Tibullan and Propertian elegy, the Horatian ode. Du Bellay even gives the young poets a list of subjects for their odes: praise of the old gods, and of noble men and women; wine, love and feasting; not forgetting a graver note, a recurring meditation on the ephemerality of all earthly things. Then let them also exercise themselves in the Italian sonnet, particularly the sonnet as Petrarch used it, in the Theocritan and Vergilian eclogue, and in the Catullan hendecasyllabic. There follows an exhortation not to be afraid of using uncommon words borrowed from the language of craftsmen or the dialects of the people (this idea is repeated by Ronsard in his  *Abrégé*), or words from the old French romances, which can add a touch of majesty to a poem. A chapter is devoted to a technical discussion on rhyme. If there is to be rhymeless verse, it must be vigorous, virile, in order to compensate the reader for the lack of rhyme. The manifesto concludes with more technical discussion, a piece of invective against French poets, and a glorification of the French language and of France.

Such was the manifesto which made known to the French the revolution which had been planned. Very shortly, in the first poems of the group, these theories were put into practice. The Brigade was composed of some fifteen of Ronsard's companions who sat under the great Classical scholar, Jean Dorat, at the Collège de Coqueret, which was part of the University of Paris. Among those who studied the Classics with such serious purpose were Du Bellay and de Baïf. Belleau, de Thyard, Jodelle, des Autels and la Pérouse are the best known of those who joined the band. But it is the first five, with Ronsard, who are usually referred to as the Pleiad. Mr. Wyndham Lewis in his *Ronsard*, points out that the name was not used much by the leader, but became popular when later the Calvinists used it in mockery. All the six men were nobly born, and much of an age, but only Ronsard and Du Bellay were poets of the first rank. Yet in the work of all of them the student can trace the influence of the manifesto and of the hunger for learning which Dorat satisfied.

Pontus de Thyard, a Burgundian, wrote, like all the group, of love, but without much spontaneity. He appears to have been a great admirer of des Autels, of whom very little is known.

De Thyard became Bishop of Châlons, and died at Verdun at the age of 84, having lived through the literary revolution, and seen the beginnings of the attack on Ronsard. He wrote nothing of permanent value. Rémy Belleau came from Nogent-le-Rotrou and was contented to remain within the limits of his very considerable talent. He was principally the poet of nature and he translated Anacreon. The best of him is in his *Bergeries*, and one poem of his, *Avril, l'bonneur et des bois . . .* is universally known. Etienne Jodelle was born in Paris, and was the tragic poet of the Pleiad. Henry II's admiration for his "Cléopatre" led to the wild escapade which attracted the hostility of the Huguenots. The King gave the author five hundred crowns, and Ronsard and his friends decided to celebrate. They led a goat crowned with ivy, in honour of Bacchus, through the village of Arcueil, with much singing and drinking. It was a silly "rag" of the kind which hard-worked students will always enjoy, but to the Huguenots it was atheism, and they never forgot it, and never let Ronsard forget it. Jodelle also wrote sonnets and odes of a stilted sort. He died in disgrace and misery at forty-one. Jean-Antoine de Baïf was an Angevin, born in Venice, where his father was Francis I's ambassador. He shared a room with Ronsard in Paris, and imitated his verse, on occasion, but without success. More important than his poetry was his foundation of a school of poetry and music, to link the two arts more closely, a project which was certain of encouragement from Ronsard, who in his *Abégé* preached the necessity of a musical accompaniment to poetry. Jodelle and de Baïf, then, may be neglected, save as literary curiosities. Belleau is to be read for his poems of nature. Du Bellay, the Angevin, has suffered, as has Ronsard, from the fact that his finest poems have been so often praised, quoted, translated, that the high excellence of the remainder of his work has been forgotten. He had not the gaiety of Ronsard, but he had all his master's love of his native fields and rivers. Spenser greatly admired him, and translated him. Some of the sonnets in his *Regrets* are worthy of Ronsard himself, and there are no more beautiful poems of exile.

All of these men were full of the Classics, and had made a serious study of poetry before sitting down to write. But in Ronsard this springtime of the Renaissance found its highest expression. He was the natural leader of these young men, because he was able to impart to them his own enthusiasm. He had a genius for friendship. He loved wine and discussion. And he had, more than the others, a confidence in his own powers which went with a boyish exuberance. He cared very much for

fame and for all the good things of this world, but beneath his high spirits was a gravity which became more apparent as he grew older. He wore a pagan cloak, but he was a firm Cathoile.

He was born in the Vendômois, at the still existing Manor of La Poissonière, in 1524, the son of an official at the Court of Francis I. He went to the Collège de Navarre at the age of ten, and at twelve was a page to the Dauphin, and then to the Duke of Orleans, who transferred him to the service of his sister Madeleine, wife of James V of Scotland. When she died, he went with Lassigny on his diplomatic mission to England, and with Lazare de Baïf, father of the poet, to Germany. There he contracted the otitis which impaired his hearing for the rest of his life, and destroyed his ambition of becoming a soldier. But he had already a wide acquaintance with the Classics, and had begun to write poetry. He now decided that he would be a poet, and at the age of nineteen he came under the influence of Dorat, and began his serious studies. Five years later, Du Bellay issued his manifesto, and the career of the poet began. He had by now become a scholar, and had acquired, during his travels, a knowledge of the world, and of men and women. He had seen the life of the Court and had heard discussed the political problems of the time. Knowing exactly what it was he wanted to do for French poetry, he proceeded to discover in himself a creative power which assured him that his name was destined to live. He filled his life with poetry, and was still dictating verses on his death-bed.

In his astonishing career a problem of great interest presents itself, and is dealt with thoroughly, and with wit and learning, by his latest biographer.

Criticism has generally concentrated on the Ronsard of the love poems. The poet of country life, of the odes and eclogues, the poet of graceful courtier-verses, the vigorous defender of the Catholics in the religious quarrel, the writer of biting satire—these have been neglected. Now it so happens that Ronsard tells the story of his many loves, happy and unhappy, in his poems. It was his custom to write of everything that happened to him. And the problem examined by Mr. Wyndham Lewis is this: Was not Ronsard to some extent compensated for the sufferings of love by the delight of inspiration? In more homely language, were there not moments when he enjoyed being miserable? To answer in the affirmative is not to deny that he suffered. But such an answer will help us to take, like Mr. Wyndham Lewis, a less conventional view of the love stories, and to treat this recurring theme in Ronsard's life with rough sympathy, rather than with sentimental regret. Though he was

often intensely unhappy, his robust nature, his strong love of living, re-asserted themselves. He repaid indifference with a song, and in exchange for scorn he offered immortality. And his biographer has found evidence, here and there throughout the poems, that love's victim was able to laugh at himself, even while he was being tormented. It is possible that he was of those who must be in love for the sake of being in love, and some such thought may have suggested to pedants their theory that certain of the ladies to whom he addressed himself were creatures of his imagination—as though a man of Ronsard's healthy temperament and active way of life would be contented with such flimsy literary games.

At the age of twenty-one the young Ronsard fell in love at first sight. The circumstances could not have been more romantic, for the lady was seated in a room of the castle at Blois, singing a song, and accompanying herself on the lute. Could anything have been more likely to unbalance a young poet? This was that Cassandre Salviati to whom he wrote 172 sonnets. Whatever he hoped from her, unless it was but inspiration, he was disappointed, for after a year of his constant attentions she married someone else. He continued to deplore his misfortune—and to write of it. And four years after meeting her, he published his first book, and won fame with it. Other loves solaced him, but he remained faithful to the image he had made of her. Many ladies were to come and go in his heart and in his poems, but when he met Cassandre in his middle age, she who had not given love, could still inspire him to one of his finest poems:

L'absence, ni l'oubli, ni la course du jour  
N'ont effacé le nom, les graces ni l'amour  
Qu'au cœur je m'imprimai dès ma jeunesse tendre,  
Fait nouveau serviteur de toi, belle Cassandre,  
Qui me fus autrefois plus chère que mes yeux,  
Que mon sang, que ma vie, et que seule en tous lieux  
Pour sujet éternel ma muse avait choisie,  
A fin de te chanter à longue poésie.  
Et si l'age, qui rompt et murs et forteresses,  
En coulant a perdu un peu de nos jeunesse,  
Cassandre, c'est tout l'un! Car, je n'ai pas égard  
A ce qui est présent, mais au premier regard,  
Au trait qui me navra de la grace enfantine,  
Qu'encore tout sanguant je sens en la poitrine.

So Ronsard made his first love immortal, and as though that were not enough, many generations later another poet, Alfred de Musset, could look back to the daughter of Cassandre as his ancestor.

Ronsard had been violently in love with Cassandre, and then

had tried to make his love into the merely chivalrous devotion of the Knight who carries his lady's glove. But there is strong reason to believe that Marie Dupin, the little peasant girl, was only the artist's model. For her he drops the grand manner, and writes gay songs, full of those affectionate diminutives and playful conceits which were so exasperating to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The whole episode is as fresh and amusing today as when Ronsard recorded it. Does not the country girl come to life in a flash when she turns from the poet, who is about to kiss her, and says sulkily, "Go to your Cassandre"? And yet, years later, when he was told of her death, he mourned her in so stately, so moving a fashion that one might have thought her his one love. But the gods never left the poet's senses at rest for longer than was necessary for him to ponder the end of a love-affair. Moreover, they and the Muses usually arranged that a first meeting with a new love should be of a kind which would make him lose his head. Genèvre was dancing, and singing to herself, on the banks of the Seine when he saw her. But she disappeared when he approached her. He found her some days later in Paris, overcame her resistance, and when she asked his name, said magnificently, "I'm Ronsard, and that's enough for you"; following this up with the words of the song in one of the revues of the 1920's, "Some of the time I love a little brunette, some of the time I love a blonde" (*Ores j'aime la noire, ores j'aime la blonde*). It did not last long, and Ronsard, with his customary honesty, admits in a poem that he loves her better when they are not together than when they are. Though he seems, for a man of thirty-seven, strangely unsophisticated he can let the reader know, now and then, that he has no illusions about himself.

From the episodes of Marie and Genèvre it will have been seen that Ronsard could play at love with women of the people. But for the grand passion he required highly-born ladies. So the gods threw in his way a cousin of Catherine de Medici, Isabeau de la Tour-Limeuil, a lady who was entirely unworthy of his attentions. She yielded to Ronsard's entreaties, it seems, and then played him doubly false, and finally married a very rich banker. Perhaps it was the fact that he was no longer young, and was growing weary of these love-affairs which led nowhere, that made him take this latest blow to heart, and write so bitterly about it. Perhaps, also, his pride was wounded. He was now a man of European fame, the first poet of France. Cassandre, it is true, had married another man, but she had never pretended to love Ronsard. In sorrow he had always the consolation of knowing that he was writing imperishable poems. Love rejected,

and then recalled in after years, is a theme for great verse. So is love reciprocated, and then slowly dying, with no more to be done. But sordid betrayal is a theme rather for virulent epigram. There was nothing majestic in the poet's mortification. But it soon passed. He had seen his Astrée, Françoise d'Estrées, at a Court masque. He was forty, but he was struck through the heart like the youngster who saw Cassandre at Blois. She was a Court lady of loose morals, but they were not loose enough, since she had already a husband and a lover, to make another exception in favour of Ronsard. He probably knew her worthlessness, and may have been simply marking time, as it were, for, as I have said, it was essential for him to be in love. But he was growing older, and his health sometimes troubled him. Looking back on his life, he conceived a great distaste for the empty days at Court, and memories of the meadows of home, the quiet river, the noble trees and the sane round of country life began to move in him. So he went back to the Vendômois, and walked in his gardens, and enjoyed long months of peace, not knowing that there was a maid-of-honour called Hélène de Surgères who was to be his last love, to bring him acute suffering, and to draw out of him some of the world's greatest sonnets.

The famous Hélène was a frigid blue-stocking. Her chief concern, when Ronsard, now nearly fifty, began to pay court to her, was that people should not imagine she was being too kind to him. She was learned, in the manner of a schoolmistress, but Ronsard had never gone to ladies for intellectual discussions. With his usual honesty, he reveals his humiliations, his exasperations, his regrets, as well as his hopes. Once more, he was unable to deceive himself all the time as to the manner of woman she was. And at fifty he was still laughing at himself in the intervals of cursing and adoring her. So perfect are the poems he writes to her that he can call up for us those scenes of nearly four hundred years ago by some detail which makes the two central figures live—the infatuated, elderly poet and the infuriatingly serene maid-of-honour. Ronsard will show you Hélène as she stands by a window in the Louvre, looking towards the fields of Montmartre, or as she sits in one of the great rooms, waiting to receive him. It is all as new, as shining as when it was written. For seven years he was in love with her, and when at last he broke from the shame of his humiliation, consoling himself with the thought of the poems she had inspired, and defiantly promising her that she should be another Laura, he returned to his own countryside, to Croixval, to refresh body and mind, and to commemorate the last and cruellest of his adventures in further poems of matchless beauty.

All these love-stories are told at length by Mr. Wyndham Lewis in such a manner, with ample quotation and comment, as to show that they were not by any means unrelieved tragedy. He proves his point. I myself believe that Ronsard suffered most from Hélène, because he knew that he was an ageing man, and that after her there would be nothing but memory. There are more famous sonnets to her than to Cassandre, but it is the general excellence of all his poetry which is so remarkable; such fecundity at such a high level has never been surpassed. My own choice of all his love poetry would be the epitaph he wrote for Marie Dupin when he heard of her death. This I would choose as an example of the music of Ronsard's best poetry and of the solemn movement of words ordered by a consummate master.

*Comme on voit sur la branche, au mois de Mai, la Rose,  
En sa belle jeunesse, en sa première fleur,  
Rendre le ciel jaloux de sa vive couleur,  
Quand l'aubé de ses pleurs, au point du jour, l'arrose,*

*La grace dans sa feuille et l'amour se repose,  
Embaumant les jardins et les arbres d'odeur;  
Mais, battue ou de pluie ou d'cessive ardeur,  
Languissante, elle meurt, feuille à feuille déclose.*

*Ainsi, en ta première et jeune nouveauté,  
Quand la terre et le ciel honoraien t'a beauté,  
La Parque t'a tuée, et cendre tu reposes.*

*Pour obsèques reçois mes larmes et mes pleurs,  
Ce vase plein de lait, ce panier plein de fleurs,  
Afin que, vif et mort, ton corps ne soit que roses.*

Time cannot challenge that. It is indestructible. Read it aloud.

Mr. Wyndham Lewis, himself a Catholic, and therefore able to see such men as Ronsard from the inside, makes it very clear that to take the paganism of Ronsard at its face-value is a superficial judgement. Every man of his ardent nature and lively intelligence was strongly attracted by the Italian Renaissance, and to present him as an atheist, or at best, a pagan, as his enemies presented him, is almost as foolish as to suggest that he worshipped the old gods whom he brought so often into his poems, and really believed that the forest of Gastine was still peopled by nymphs and dryads. These things were the antique beauty which nourished his imagination. Evidences of paganism are only too easy to find all through his poems; in the drinking songs, the love songs, the country songs. They are full of Bacchus and his

train, Venus and Cupid, Strephon and Chloe. The Ode in which he chooses his burial place beneath a green tree among his own fields is completely pagan, with shepherds sacrificing a lamb above him every year, and pouring milk on the grave. In this Ode death is not a Christian transition from this world to another, but a descent to the kingdom of Pluto. But the Ode was an Ode, and Ronsard was not expressing his own beliefs, any more than was Du Bellay, when he borrowed the famous lines of Catullus about the eternal night that awaits us when our passage through the daylight is ended. That perpetual Horatian exhortation to enjoy the fugitive hour, those Catullan echoes in Ronsard's verse, are in his mind, not in his soul. We meet the full man on his death-bed, in that lucid confession of Faith which he made to those about him at St. Cosme. But his latest biographer has not waited for that scene. He has shown us, beneath the laughter and the sorrow, the "iron certitudes" which governed the poet's days. He might have lived an uneventful countryman's life, as he shows it to us in *Le Voyage de Tours*, or died a soldier, as in his *Hymn to Death*. But we should not have had the poems, for he would have been spared his hopeless loves and the longings of an exile.

Ronsard held that a poet is a man dedicated, a man with heavy responsibilities. Although he was of a gay temperament, and liked feasts and songs, he took those responsibilities very seriously, not only while he was a student, but when he sat down to write. Poetry, even more than love, filled his life. Everything that happened to him turned into music, grave or gay. And with rare honesty he set everything down, being not afraid to leave it to posterity to judge him. When he had finished with love, and was sleepless and suffering, he still had the comfort of poetry. In the winter of 1585, when that illness which he knew would be his last came upon him, he went back to his own fields, scourged with gout and unable to sleep. In the long, dark nights, as he lay wakeful, his thoughts still moved to music, not dancing now, as of old, but in solemn and stately progress. He describes in a sonnet how, for sixteen hours, he has tossed from side to side, on the margin of death, open-eyed, crying out for release. The insomnia was a worse torture than the gout, and in another sonnet he calls on God to end his torment. He writes until his fingers can no longer hold the pen, and then dictates. Even when he has received the Viaticum, rallying a little, he has another sonnet ready, with the courageous, almost jaunty cry,

La trompette a sonné, serre bagage, et va  
Le chemin déserté que Jésus-Christ trouva . . .

Even when his limbs are growing cold, and the monks are bringing the Holy Oils, and preparing to say the prayers for the dying, he motions weakly with his hand, and dictates in a failing voice his last sonnet, the last of all his poems, with its firm Christian resignation and its hope of Heaven.

One man will tell you that it is the extravagant pedantry of the Pleiad which accounts for the swift reaction against their work. Another will say that it passed like a flash of lightning because it offended the literary conscience of the French by its disordered gusto. A third will talk of the lack of Greek in the humanists of the seventeenth century. A fourth will maintain that the great classicists of the seventeenth century took the best ideas of Ronsard and rejected his faults; that even though his poetry was neglected, his influence remained, to echo in certain poems of André Chénier, to be a weapon for Hugo and the Romantics against their opponents, and finally, in our time, to lead to a revival of interest in his work. I should like to see this literary problem discussed by Mr. Wyndham Lewis, who is the least conventional of scholars and whose lively, witty style covers wide reading and sure judgement. He does, in his Epilogue, answer those who complain of the display of abstruse learning which marred some of Ronsard's poems. He answers them by quoting a verse that might have come out of Rabelais, a string of recondite epithets, and by claiming that this was not the showing-off of a pompous prig, but the madcap fun of a scholar bursting with high spirits, and tossing adjectives about like coloured balls, after the fashion of the clerks and monks who wrote the merry Latin hymns. Mr. Wyndham Lewis, while not going into the reasons for Ronsard's disappearance for two hundred years, attributes his present popularity to the fact that in the Machine Age, "He stands for so many noble and gracious things now in peril from without and within: the golden classic spirit, the fundamental culture, the ancestral religion which nourishes and supports it all." I would add to that a quality, whatever it is, in the highest poetry which enables it to outlast schools, movements and fashions, and to remain for ever young.

*Enfin Malherbe vint.* Into those three famous words of the acid Boileau is packed his century's judgement of the Pleiad. It was Malherbe who led the attack on Ronsard. A Norman of Caen, he was born six years after Du Bellay's manifesto was published, and grew to manhood through the years during which Ronsard's name was being spoken all over Europe. Temperament, as well as intellectual convictions, had destined him to be the opponent of the Pleiad. He had none of Ronsard's up-

roarious spirits, none of his courtesy, none of his gift for friendship. Though a man of strong and deep feelings, his self-restraint made him seem of a colder nature than he was. He had an intense jealousy for the dignity of the French language, and a caricature of him would make him a formalist, a grammarian. His hostility to the poetry of the Pleiad was unreasonably bitter. He condemned the exaggerations of the early years as though there was nothing else to consider in the work of the group. The diminutives, the bastard words, the metrical experiments were repulsive to him. He wrote very little poetry, and that only laboriously. When he said that a man ought to rest for ten years after completing a poem, he was not speaking entirely in jest. What he did write has little in it built to endure. The line of his which everyone knows: *et rose, elle a vécu ce que vivent les roses*, might, by an amusing irony, be from a poem by Ronsard. It was not as a poet that he had his effect, but as a critic, as the leader of a group which set out to canalize the enormous energies of Ronsard and his friends, to bring their experiments within reasonable bounds, to confine the French tongue within the strict classical limits. Malherbe had no force of imagination, and he would seem, at first glance, to be unlikely to succeed in his task. But he had tireless persistence, and he said what people wanted to hear. He profoundly disapproved of nearly everything in Du Bellay's manifesto. He would have nothing to do with Pindar or Petrarch; no new words, no archaisms, no dialect words, no craft words, no invented words. He examined the structure of the various metres, the order of words, masculine and feminine rhymes. He condemned inversions, hiatus, lack of caesura. There was not a detail with which he did not concern himself. He prepared the way for Corneille and Racine, and introduced the purity of the classic which remained unchallenged until the coming of Victor Hugo. That such a man should have accomplished such a work is astonishing. For his was a cold enthusiasm, nor was it harnessed to a creative gift, as was the hot enthusiasm of Ronsard. As we watch him we seem to see a geometrician solving a problem rather than a poet discussing poetry. But the reaction set in, and Boileau endorsed the verdict of Malherbe. Mr. Hilaire Belloc in his *Avril* tells an excellent story of this persistent Norman. He was on his death-bed. He thought he heard his nurse say something ungrammatical. Turning from the priest, he corrected her with his customary bluntness. The priest, amazed, said, "This is not the time for that sort of thing." "All times are the time for that sort of thing," replied Malherbe. "With my last breath will I defend the purity and grandeur of the French tongue."

Humbert Wolfe, a critic of sensibility as well as a poet, did something to arouse an interest in Ronsard in this country, but in his enthusiasm for the love poems he did not draw sufficient attention to the variety of Ronsard's other work. Everybody knew, if only from anthologies, that Ronsard was the poet of love. It is one of the merits of Mr. Wyndham Lewis's book that he considers the poet's work as a whole, giving us the political and religious background of the times, and allotting their due place to the militant poems in defence of the Church and the superb elegies, odes and eclogues. He gives examples of Ronsard's wide range, from the simplest of little ditties, written to amuse a goose-girl or a milkmaid, to the most erudite exercises. He also has something to say of the perfection of Ronsard's music. It is this mastery of rhythm that makes the rehabilitation of the poet so important for an age which seems to have decided that there is something admirably downright and virile in prose hacked to bits to look like poetry. Ronsard can play, in his verse, every kind of melody, from a country jig to a threnody. When he is happy he sings enchanting songs, which hold so securely his passing mood that we can almost see and hear him across four hundred years. When he is melancholy, he moves us so profoundly that I can imagine a man who had no French, and heard one of the great sonnets read aloud, responding to what is, after all, a kind of magic in poetry. Lastly, an age in which so many of those over forty are becoming weary of overgrown towns, of unceasing noise, and of the encroachment of the politicians and civil servants into every home and every human activity, will surely turn with pleasure to Ronsard's descriptions of country life in the old time.

J. B. MORTON.

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## ALBERT SCHWEITZER: HIS WORK AND HIS PHILOSOPHY\*

ALBERT SCHWEITZER'S is a remarkable and bewildering personality. At the age of twenty-six he began to publish books, of no little influence in England, on the eschatology of the New Testament; *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*, a masterpiece of

\* Oskar Kraus. (A. & C. Black. 6s.)

expository narrative, appeared when he was thirty-one. In the previous year he had brought out a large and important book on Johann Sebastian Bach. His reputation as theologian and philosopher and organist was considerable. Yet in fulfilment of a resolution made when he was twenty-one he took a medical degree and in his middle thirties left Europe for medical work among the natives of Equatorial Africa. There for the most part he has worked ever since, but from time to time appear notebooks and autobiographical writings and parts of a large book, *The Decay and Restoration of Civilization*.

But the remarkable thing about this history is not so much the sacrifice of a career, in common repute distinguished and brilliant, for a life of toilsome and obscure self-sacrifice in the service of suffering African natives; many another has made such a sacrifice, and in Schweitzer's case there is no question of obscurity. The remarkable and bewildering thing is the grounds on which he could make his choice. What these were emerges clearly enough from this essay of the late Professor Kraus. The essay, therefore, should be of great service to those readers who know Schweitzer only as the author of *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*,\* or are anxious to understand Schweitzer's own conclusions in this work.

The rationale of Schweitzer's capital choice, in the opinion of Professor Kraus, involves all the qualities of his head and heart; therefore, he thinks, it is of enormous importance for our times. Perhaps it is; but perhaps it is but the mocking-bird of yesterday. Schweitzer's heart is a big one, generous and self-sacrificing; too big to be daunted by his head. Full of compassion for all suffering while yet a boy, and convinced that "he who has been blessed above his fellows with the good things of life must give the same measure of happiness to others", he made his great resolve to take his share of the misery that weighs so crushingly on this world and, in vicarious expiation of the selfish neglect and injustice of Europe, he went out to Lambaréne, providing all his expenses from his own earnings. There is here nobility of heart and of action. Nevertheless, the relation of thought and conduct is rarely of such sort that the excellence of the latter can be taken, without a further close inspection, to guarantee the excellence of the former; moreover, Schweitzer has written many books and sponsors a set of ideas; but the soundness and sanity of books and ideas are qualities to be assessed independently of their author's biography. In the wake of Kraus, then, let us follow Schweitzer through his intellectual adventures.

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\* The English translation of *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*.

For most scholars Schweitzer's portrait of Christ is already, I think, a museum-piece. As is well known, his view was that the historical Jesus is to be construed by interpreting the Jesus of the Gospels in the light of the contemporary Jewish religious background—a background discoverable, presumably, with some sureness independently of the Gospels, for otherwise the internal criticism of the New Testament, of which he is full, could never get under way. In this effort of historical construction we must be ruthless. If the Jesus who thus emerges is "a stranger and an enigma" to our time, he says, let us confess that in their attempts to disengage what is abiding and eternal in the Christ the liberal theologians (he has Harnack in mind) have impoverished Him and attuned His sayings to our own pettiness; let us confess, too, that "in the process we ourselves have been enfeebled, and have robbed our own thoughts of their vigour in order to project them back into history and make them speak to us out of the past". This is excellently said. But alas, as we shall see, *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. The Jewish background that gives the clue to the historical Christ, Schweitzer thought, is one obsessed with eschatology, and eschatology (be it noted) of a special kind: it was believed, high and low, that the Kingdom of God was of such a nature as to come into being, suddenly and completely and finally, in the train of some cosmic catastrophe, short of which there was no existent Kingdom of God in any sense whatever. An eschatology of this kind cannot be elicited out of the New Testament, written though many of its books are by Jews familiar with the Old Testament: for the New Testament proclaims a Kingdom of God existing in some sense before the Parousia.\* And to use rabbinical writings here as the key for interpretation resembles (let us be frank) that other quondam pastime of German scholarship, the interpretation of Plato in the light of the "Megarian School".† None the less, restoring Jesus to the historical context of his own time, Schweitzer delineated him as a man convinced of the imminent end of this world: on this cataclysm would supervene the Kingdom of God; meanwhile the predestined elect were to watch and pray. Christ established no Church, of course, and propounded no doctrine beyond the *Interimsethik* of the Beatitudes; persuaded of Messiahship, he determines to take on himself, if possible, the tribulations that in prophecy must precede the coming of

\* See, for instance, such an "eschatological" book as that of Prof. C. H. Dodd (Norris-Hulse Professor of Divinity at Cambridge), *The Apostolic Preaching and its Development*. (London, 1936.)

† Cp. Lagrange, *Le Messianisme chez les Juifs* (Paris, 1909), 39; and more fully, Bonsirven, *Le Judaïsme palestinien au temps de Jésus Christ*. (Paris, 1934-5).

the Kingdom and offers himself to suffering and death. But neither in religion nor in morals has he anything to teach our minds.

Now the puzzle of Schweitzer, for one acquainted only with his theological writing, was this. The historical Christ of Harnack was a figure calculated to move to enthusiasm, perhaps. But how could Schweitzer's Christ, a man alien to our time and completely mistaken in his own, confirm a compassionate heart and inspire it with the resolve that has been described? Was it reasonable for Schweitzer to devote himself to the job of a medical missionary?

As I said, *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*; once again the past is fitted into the triviality of the present. The historical constructions of Harnack, superb as in other respects their quality is, are controlled by presuppositions taken over from Ritschl. Schweitzer would have none of them. Why? To some extent, no doubt, like so many German scholars (again let us be frank), particularly when they are young—Schweitzer's theology, remember, is a young man's work—he preferred the pursuit of truth to truth, that is, he preferred the elaboration of a fresh idea; for such people, as Santayana put it, any idea will do, so long as it is pregnant with another that may presently take its place.\* But this is manifestly not a complete explanation.

"Jesus means something to our world because a mighty spiritual force streams forth from Him and flows through our own time also. This fact can neither be shaken nor confirmed by any historical discovery. It is the solid foundation of Christianity." This seems a tame conclusion indeed for one so proud of his originality. Surely there is something lurking behind the arras? There is. "To understand the meaning of the whole—and that is what a world-view demands—is for us an impossibility . . . I believe I am the first among Western thinkers who has ventured to recognize this crushing result of knowledge, and who is absolutely sceptical about our knowledge of the world without at the same time renouncing with it belief in world-and life-affirmation and ethics." So he wrote elsewhere; and correspondingly, the colossal historical mistake of Jesus is not a religious mistake. Religious energy is communicated by means of a tension: the tension is that between the world-accepting and world-affirming spirit of modern ideals and the world-rejecting and world-denying spirit of Christ. "Why spare the spirit of the individual man its appointed task of fighting its way through

\* *Egotism in German Philosophy*, ch. XII. This sane and penetrating book appeared, unluckily, during the last war and has been underrated, in consequence, ever since.

the world-negation of Jesus, of contending with him at every step over the value of material and intellectual goods—a conflict in which it may never rest?"\*

Here, then, is a hint of that triviality of the present into which, by some pre-established harmony, Schweitzer's historical Jesus is found to fit. It is the great value of Kraus's essay that it gives us plenty of information about this harmony. Not that it is easy to "get one's hands around" Schweitzer's philosophy: the inter-relations of his ideas are hard to grasp, and a reader will not get on until he suspends pertinacious questionings. For ideas are here charged with sentiment; indeed, it is not too much to say that the ideas are epiphenomenal to the feelings. And the feelings themselves are "undisciplined squads of emotion", and protean. (If I seem unduly severe, let it be remembered that Schweitzer himself is not ashamed of "sentimentality" and is a man avid, as Kraus comments, for the naïve and the elemental.) But the ideas, very shortly and roughly, are these. Complete cosmological agnosticism is the assured result of modern philosophical reflection: there is no reasonable *Weltanschauung* possible. None the less, the generous promptings of the heart to a "reverence for life" justify the optimism requisite for serene ethical (belief and?) action: a sensible *Lebensanschauung* is possible, and it is validated by and draws its sap from a mysticism of the will and an irrepressible will-to-live.

This is the skeletal structure of the system. The system is of a type familiar enough in German post-Kantian romanticism; not for nothing did Schweitzer write a doctorate dissertation on Kant's philosophy of religion. In the philosophy of morals, as Kraus recognizes, "he converts the 'as-if' philosophy of religion of Kant's old age into a philosophy of the 'notwithstanding'".

It would take too long, and it is without sapiential value, to put flesh on this skeleton. In any case, the reader will probably know what to expect: Kraus rightly applies to Schweitzer the latter's own dictum about Kant (untrue though it is of Kant), that he is merely the brain in which the philosophical ideas and problems of the day come to fruition; there are minds that flourish most in inverted commas. Moreover, in a philosophy of this sort what matters most is not the ideas but the ambient aura of feeling, and this cannot be inhaled in the space of an article.

Of this philosophy I shall have more to say presently. But this it is, be it observed at once, that controls Schweitzer's

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\* This quotation, with several others, comes from *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, ch. XX (2nd edition). The rest are from Kraus's book.

interpretation of Jesus, as surely—and less unobtrusively—as Ritschl's controlled Harnack's; though naturally, of course, as in all such historical interpretation there is reciprocal influence between the interpretative conceptions and the ostensible historical facts: by yielding the former the latter confirm them. Of this control Schweitzer's own words are evidence. "In spite of external differences in form I feel that Jesus' *Weltanschauung* is identical with mine in that which I would call the simplicity, the infinity and heroism of His ethics. Through the *Weltanschauung* and view of life which gradually developed in my mind I was able to understand the eschatological views of Jesus and was thus enabled to do justice to the historical Jesus." In such fashion, too, after all these many centuries of misunderstanding, is he enabled to do justice to some Greek thinkers. For in *The Decay and Restoration of Civilization*, confronted with men like Plato and Aristotle, who extolled intellectual contemplation, he attributes to them an unconscious and unadmitted self-deception: "the will, without admitting it, overpowered knowledge. Life-view prompted and world-view recited." Without knowing it, they were Schweitzers born out of due time. This is indeed the felicity of the house of bondage, "of the soul which is so fast in prison that it cannot go forth". Exuberance? But in older men it is tiresome. Degas was very shrewd. *Tout le monde a du talent à vingt-cinq ans. La difficulté est d'en avoir à cinquante.*

"Life-view prompted." The nature and quality of what Schweitzer is attributing to Plato and Aristotle may be gauged from a sentence in a letter. "The sceptical repression of the metaphysical impulse finds an outlet in mystical emotionalism." Yes, I have experienced this though I have not experienced ethics emotionally, but as a logical necessity—or super-logically, if you like." What, really, is this philosophy?

Schweitzer is not simply saying that ethical naturalism rests on a mistake, that is, that the *derivation* of ethical from non-ethical propositions (propositions, say, about nature or the soul) is in principle mistaken. Indeed, he appears to presuppose this "naturalistic fallacy", as it has come to be called. For he seems to consider a "rational" philosophy of morals to be impossible precisely because there is no comprehensive theory of nature to provide its groundwork; and it is here implied, I think, that ethical insights are not *a priori*, so that there can be no refuge in a distinction of pure and practical reason. *Pace* the suggestion of the Master of Balliol, Schweitzer is no orthodox Kantian. But what he does hold is elusive. Sometimes mysticism of the will seems to be equiparated with ethical reflection and contrasted with ethics based on scientific knowledge; sometimes sheer will

to action is awarded a unique validity of its own. But on the whole, I think, the rationale of effortful moral conduct is found in the "inwardly experienced will-to-live" identified with a dynamic feeling of reverence for life. (The reasonableness of this identification and the differentiation of this will into the various types of moral endeavour remain unaccounted for.) In other words, if you will, for all that I can see, there's no point in being anything but listlessly apathetic about everything and everybody; still, I desperately want to be kind and compassionate, and I'm *going* to be kind and compassionate; so, somehow, these things must be worth while. It is an old story; we tell ourselves tales, and so transmute nature "in the crucible of imagination that a new image of shining gold replaces the old idol of clay."\*

This is indeed a philosophy of a familiar type, and it has its nobility. But it is a philosophy, one would think, to be accepted in silence and patient resignation, not the sort of thing that one rushes off lyrically to tell one's friends about. Yet Schweitzer appears to be so happy in his cosmic agnosticism that it never occurs to him to wonder if it be all a mistake. Why not? Again let us be frank even in war-time and in spite of our compassion for our refugees from Middle Europe. For in this type of philosophizing the most outstanding quality is surely an egotism truly monumental. Without such a complete agnosticism it is not easy to cut a figure quite so romantically pathetic; it is certainly impossible to make such a fuss. And in precisely the same way one's Christianity is something one can contemplate with a peculiarly satisfying complacency if it is a *Gnosis* so rarified that Christian tradition knows nothing of it and if in unconscious escapism or wishful thinking the generations have nourished themselves on the milk of babes and not on the meat of the strong. But time always takes a stern revenge: already in Schweitzer's Jesus is detectable a projected Ego of a particular moment and milieu, whose moods are all too easily predictable. "It distresses me," said Sir Max Beerbohm, "this failure to keep pace with the leaders of thought as they pass into oblivion." The pity is that human reason is so unsure of itself that at any moment we can usually be taken in by anything, provided it be sufficiently solemn and methodical.†

His pedantries apart, Professor Kraus did his expository work very well indeed. His full-dress critical appreciations, however,

\* Bertrand Russell: *Philosophical Essays*, 66 (A Free Man's Worship).

† In Schweitzer's apophthegms you will find this solemnity in plenty; a characteristic one is that what we call love is in its innermost essence pity, being the will-to-live diverted from itself. This, too, again characteristically, is another old friend.

are by no means so good. "But the earth-spirit (*Erdgeist*) is not the spirit of the Universe (*Weltgeist*) and all earthly, as all spatial *happenings*, indeed as all happenings without exception, are only 'synsemantic', that is, only comprehensible as links in connexion with and dependent on the immeasurable process of evolution." This is too often the flavour. His psychology is even odder, and the inevitable parade of Brentano is often infelicitous. But his essay remains invaluable for the comprehension of Schweitzer and Schweitzerian theology.

This discussion, may I repeat, has been of Schweitzer's philosophy and theology, and it is leagues removed from my intention in any way to deprecate the nobility of his devotion to Lambaréné. And even apart from the evidence of this devotion, Schweitzer is manifestly a warm-hearted, nice man, and a fine musician (about his book on Bach there seem to be a sureness and a quiet integrity absent from his other writings): a man who deserved better than to be led by a bad academic tradition and milieu into fields for which his endowments did not suit him. It is a common lot, but a tragic one.

VINCENT TURNER, S.J.

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## THE WORD-PAINTING OF VIRGIL

IN an article published in the issue of THE DUBLIN REVIEW for April, 1944, Mr. Arnold Lunn argues with his usual vigour and scholarship for the superiority of the moderns over the Classical authors of antiquity in the description of landscape. Although Mr. Lunn writes "In the literary criticism of the classics, the proportion of precise thought to uncritical enthusiasm is nowhere smaller than in the appraisal of classical word painting", he is nevertheless supported in his contention by a large number of not undistinguished scholars. Thus the Rev. Thomas Royds, a well-known Virgilian scholar, quotes Whately with approval where he says, almost in the words of Mr. Lunn: "It is worth observing that of what is now called picturesque beauty the ancients seem to have had no perception. A modern reader does indeed find in their writings descriptions which in his mind excite ideas of that kind of beauty. But the writers themselves seem to have felt delight only in the refreshing coolness of streams and shady trees—everything we admire

as sublime scenery, they seem to have regarded merely with aversion and horror."

He must be a bold man who would enter the lists against Mr. Lunn. Of the many that have done so, few seem to have escaped unworsted and none unscathed. But emboldened by his courteous reference to my opinions, I shall cheerfully blunder into a contest in their defence which even those better equipped than I might well hesitate to undertake. Trusting in a great love of classical literature in general and of Virgil in particular, rather than in a scholarship which, in my case, would need to be borrowed, like David against Goliath, I shall sally forth to the fray. But I shall limit my terrain, I shall meet Mr. Lunn on the home ground of Virgil, *lo mio maestro e 'l mio autore*, and not concern myself with classical literature as a whole.

The supreme artistry of Virgil consists in both the form and the content of his poetry. By the form I mean not merely the metre of which he was a consummate master, but the whole texture of his verse: his subtle use of vowels, of pauses, of rhythm and of words. Virgil, I maintain, conveys his meaning, the imponderables of his vision, as much by the form of his poetry as by the content. Change one word for another meaning the same, merely alter the order of the words, and the effect is lost, the vessel is broken and the bouquet has escaped, the body has been killed and the soul has left it. The form and content of Virgil's poetry are so inter-dependent, that if the content is judged apart from the form, half of what he says is just as much missed as if the form were to be judged apart from the content.

It may be objected that the words used by Virgil are conventional and obvious (sometimes!), and that anyone could do the same. The reply to this is: Let anyone try! The art of Virgil is never more supreme than when it is concealed.

I believe that all great poetry depends for its sense as much on its form as it does on its content. Let us leave Virgil for a moment and turn to one whom Mr. Lunn would probably consider a greater poet. Dante, in the first Canto of his *Inferno*, describes a wood into which he has strayed in this way:

*Ab quanto a dir qual era e cosa dura  
esta selva selvaggia e aspera e forte  
che nel pensier rinova la paura!*

What more simple and almost conventional phrases, and yet what a haunting sense of fear the poet has conveyed by them! It is not what he has said, but the way he has said it, that conveys so much. Change one word and the effect is lost. Or those famous two lines of Racine:

*Ariane ma soeur, de quel amour blessée  
Vous mourîtes au bords où vous fîtes laissée.*

Why did de Musset faint when he first heard Rachel speak these words? They are quite ordinary, the content of the lines is not striking, but it is their form that conveys so much. The same is true of that lovely verse of Ronsard:

*"Done si vous me croyez, mignonne  
Tandis que votre âge fleuronne . . ."*

Of all these examples Mr. Lunn could make a superb translation, but it would be dead. It would be dead because verbal accuracy cannot give the form, and the form is as eloquent as the content. Even of Shakespeare the same is true. What but the form expresses the exquisite melancholy of those lines:

In such a night  
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand  
Upon the wild sea banks, and waft her love  
To come again to Carthage.

Change one word, substitute "savage" for "wild" or "return" for "to come again" and all is lost.

The whole construction of Virgil's poetry, even when he seems most bald, is exceedingly complicated, and he expresses himself just as much by a complex co-ordination of rhythm and sound as he does by the content of the words. In the famous line "*tendebantque manus ripae ulterioris amore*", the effect is obtained as much by the skilful use of short light vowels, as by content. Mr. Jackson Knight in his book *Roman Vergil* has noted the wonderful effect, more eloquent than any elaborate word picture, obtained by a pause in the fifth foot and the equivalent of a four-syllable word at the end in the line: "*immitit; sonuere undae, rapidum super amnem.*" "Vergil has succeeded," writes Mr. Knight, "in the impossible task of representing by sound the impressions of a baby in this unusual position." And these are only two examples of what could be illustrated by almost every line in Virgil's poetry.

The point I am trying to make is not merely that the form of Virgil's poetry is quite perfect, this Mr. Lunn would grant, but that the form conveys as much or more than could be conveyed by any patch of word-painting however purple the colouring! The difference between the poetry of Virgil and the prose passage from Meredith, which Mr. Lunn has quoted, is rather the difference between a painted picture and a coloured photograph. Individual details are not always clearly painted in by the great master artists, they are not so minutely described as by a photo-

graph, but their effect is obtained by skilful colouring. Often one could swear when looking at a picture of a field, that each blade of grass could be counted, but close examination shows that no single blade of grass has been painted in.

Mr. Lunn writes that he does not suggest that the form of Virgil's poetry is a gratuitous ornament imposed from without, but that is exactly what he does suggest by judging the content apart from the form. "Form," he writes, "may be related to content as the body to the soul, but however inseparable body and soul may be, it is possible to judge them separately." Let us rather say that the form of poetry is related to the content as the soul is related to the body, and while admitting that it is possible to judge them separately, I deny that it is any more possible to take the mere content of Virgil's poetry and judge it as if it was the *whole*, than it is possible to appraise a dead body as if it was the whole man. Still less is it possible to take a dead body and compare it to a living man as if it were on the same footing, and this, so it seems to me, is just what Mr. Lunn does when he translates a few lines of Virgil and compares them, shorn of their poetic form, to a passage from the writings of Meredith. "Translation," writes Mr. Lunn, "is a valuable corrective to verdicts unduly influenced by form." But why "unduly influenced"? How can the form, which is as much part of the picture as the content, unduly influence the verdict?

BRUNO S. JAMES.

## CORRESPONDENCE

Bell Court,  
Aldbourne,  
Marlborough,  
Wilts.  
5 April, 1944.

To the Editor of THE DUBLIN REVIEW.

Sir,

I would like to protest against the complete misrepresentation of my book *The Spanish Labyrinth*, which Dom Romanus Rios gives in his review of it in your last number. He has apparently been so irritated by certain criticisms I have made of the Spanish Church—criticisms with which many Catholics are in agreement or part agreement—that he has failed to take in the general intention. Thus, who would guess from his review that I had expressed deep

admiration of the Spanish Church before 1700, that I had regretted the loss of the Church's influence in the nineteenth century, that I had criticized the sterile attitude of the Liberal anti-clericals or deplored the anti-clerical legislation of the Republic?

Allow me to give just one example of his critical methods. He complains of the partiality of my bibliography. Yet of the twelve books cited for the chapter entitled *The Liberals and the Church*, ten are by active Catholics and only two by Liberals. Similarly of the books cited under *The Carlists*, eleven are by Right Wing Catholics and only four by Liberals. Of these, one is an essay by Unamuno and another a historical study (not a novel) by one of the most famous of contemporary writers, Pio Baroja. Both Unamuno and Pio Baroja were supporters of General Franco.

Such are the critical methods of Dom Romanus Rios. I could give a dozen other equally illuminating examples of them. As William Blake pointed out, people sometimes draw totally different things from the same book. I am sorry to think that he has been to the trouble of reading mine without understanding anything of what I tried to express in it.

Yours truly,  
GERALD BRENAN.

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## SOME RECENT BOOKS

*The Christian Sacrifice.* By Canon Eugene Masure. Translated by Dom Illyd Trethowan, O.S.B. (Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1944. Pp. 288. 15s.)

We all owe a debt of gratitude to Dom Illyd Trethowan for choosing Canon Masure's *Le Sacrifice du Chef* for translation, and for the excellent way in which he has translated it. Strangely enough Masure's book, so far as I can find out, does not seem to have made the stir in Catholic circles abroad which it deserves. I feel sure that its translation will arouse much discussion and a deeper appreciation of and love for the Mass and the inexhaustible riches of the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist. It belongs to that genre of theological writing in which the French are so pre-eminently gifted. At the opposite pole to the text book it gives formulas and syllogisms new significance; it lifts the mind on tiptoe with expectation of new discoveries, and the language is almost too eloquent and hypnotic. Even if the reader is not sure at the end that he has understood Masure completely, he knows very well that he has benefited by the book, and lastingly benefited.

Throughout the book Masure uses a wide canvas. His first part gives us what he believes to be the flesh and bone of sacrifice. All of us can learn something from these pages. One chapter is headed, "The True Idea of Sacrifice: A Transfer of Property", and he explains the meaning he attaches to this by the definition: "It is a liturgical offering in which we pay the necessary price, and which, once accepted by God, becomes a means of communion with Him." The definition is developed with great force, but all I can do here is to state an impression that the idea of "offering" is underplayed and the idea of "transfer of property" overplayed, and that "the means of communion" too easily resolves itself into "cashing in" on the results of the transfer. I must also pass by the second part of the book which is given over to a very suggestive and brilliant exposition of the relations of nature and person in Christ. Especially valuable is Masure's insistence on the divine relation of filiation affecting the whole human outlook of Christ and the beautiful correspondence between the divine procession and the work of our Redemption. If again I have to stop to criticize, it is because Masure so inspires us with his own eloquence that at the end we feel that we expected more than we have actually been given.

In the last part of the book he deals at length with the Christian sacrifice, the sacrifice of the Cross and the Sacrifice of the Mass. Many will agree with him when he says that within recent years our views on the Mass have been enlarged by the writings of Billot, Lepin and de la Taille. After the Reformation Catholic thought on the Mass was limited by the need of controversy, of answering the objections made against "immolation" and the sacrificial nature of the rite of the Last Supper. The immense tradition of the Fathers and the Middle Ages was to some extent neglected, and so it is only within living memory that the significance of that tradition has been realized and the doctrine of the Mass put in its proper setting. Masure pays a handsome tribute to the work of the three great theologians mentioned above, but he feels that while they cleared the way they failed to give the ancient and final answer. That answer is in St. Thomas and St. Augustine and in their understanding of the words, sign and sacrament. Of this sign Masure writes: "We have just used a word of awful import in which the whole mystery of the Eucharistic sacrifice is found." Other writers turned to immolation or oblation or the heavenly sacrifice; none of these suffices of itself; it is in the "efficacious sign" that the mystery is revealed. What then does Masure mean by this "efficacious sign", since all turns upon it? I will quote two passages which may provide a clue. "This bread and this wine, before becoming the visible species of the body and blood of Christ, must be the sign and the symbol of our repentance, our love, our renunciation of sin, our adherence to God. The

more helpless and simple and innocent they seem the more clearly do they show the sentiments of our souls; for these they stand for first before they serve as sacrament of the Saviour's body. In that sense above all the sacrifice of men is to become the sacrifice of Christ." "And if we must gather up the result of our researches in a single phrase for the last time in the form which our inquiry demands . . . we should be disposed to say: the bread and the wine, which try in their feeble way to be the sign of our religion, are changed into the Body and Blood which were the sign of Jesus Christ's religion; but as the species of bread and wine remain after this substantial change, the religion of Jesus finally subsists under the sign of our religion; we have all the reality of the one under the species of the other, all the sacrificial reality of the Head's religion beneath the symbolic figures of the religion of the members."

In these passages the sign is made to carry the whole structure of the Christian sacrifice, and Masure is confident that it can do so. The fact that other theologians agree with him and that the view is becoming so popular demands that it should be taken seriously—very seriously, in fact, if, as they claim, it is the traditional and Thomist view. It is unfortunate, however, that they should fasten on to what is among the least profound remarks of St. Thomas. St. Thomas follows the habit of his time in starting the discussion of a term with an appeal to its supposed etymological meaning. He says: "Sacrificia proprie dicuntur quando circa res Deo oblatis aliquid fit." The very vagueness of this remark makes it hard to translate, as Dom Illtyd finds. But the next remark shows what St. Thomas meant. He says in effect that sacrifice is, as the word shows, holy-making, and so there must be some action in sacrifice. As the verb "to sacrifice" is an active one I do not see that we have learnt very much; and yet in their anxiety to see in every word of St. Thomas an inspired word of wisdom some theologians want to build a whole theory on these words. Masure draws from them the somewhat surprising conclusion that sacrifice is "a religious transfer of property" or "To sacrifice is to obtain something divine". I do not see how these two definitions fit together, nor how they help to explain sacrifice. But both of them are important for his doctrine of sign. Unfortunately "sign", as it has to carry so much, has to have many meanings. In the passage already quoted it is ambiguous. But even were it unambiguous it is difficult to see how the fact that by transubstantiation the sign of our "religion" is united to the "sign" of Christ's religion can of itself resolve the whole question of the Sacrifice of the Mass. We know already that the bread and wine are a sign of our interior dedication; we know that at the words of consecration the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ; we may say with Masure that the Body and Blood are the sign of Christ's interior dedication,

though already the meaning of the word "sign" is beginning to shift; we may even say, with a further shift of the word "sign", that our religion, the species of bread and wine, is a sign of Christ's religion, the Body and Blood, but we are still waiting to learn the answer to the problems which have been vexing all the theologians.

That this is not an unfair criticism seems to me to be supported by the ambiguity of the language at crucial moments. Take the word "immolation", the Church constantly uses this word. The Post-Tridentine theologians inclined to interpret it as a slaying; de la Taille argued that the Church used it in a general sense as equivalent to sacrifice. But Masure says that the immolation of a victim is "the renunciation of it so as to give it to God, and, thanks to God, eventually to regain it". Such a use of the word makes it convertible with "oblation", and not only with oblation but God's acceptance of the oblation as well. Again in the idea of sacrifice we pass from the notion of "the transference to the Divinity of earthly wealth, renounced by man to make it holy" to that of gaining the benefits of a sacrifice: "It consists in taking possession of this unique exemplar, making it her own, to realize all its effects and to taste all its fruits." But what I find it hardest of all to understand is the part of God and the part of man in the sacrifice. The Church is represented as asking God to change its sign into the Blood and Body of Jesus Christ. "And how should I know that this offering gives you joy? Only if You, my Father, work this conversion, if You yourself, taking possession of my bread and my chalice, change them into the sole oblation which can win Your favour. . . . So it is that transubstantiation, properly understood, seen in the light of Christ's intentions at His institution of it, *is the very sacrifice.*" I pass by the unnoticed stress here on oblation as the essential act of sacrifice; what I do not understand is who sacrifices? Apparently it is God the Father who transubstantiates the bread and wine, "works this conversion", and transubstantiation "*is the very sacrifice of the altar!*" It is God the Father then, if this be so, who sacrifices at Mass. But this cannot be meant. On the other hand it is clearly not the Church which "works the conversion", not even as members of Christ, *virtute Christi*. All it can do is to give the sign in the bread and wine of its inner dedication and ask that its sign should be changed into another sign. I cannot guess what view Masure holds of the causality of the sacrament, nor do I understand how Our Lord at the Cenacle converted the bread and wine, nor how His Headship and Priesthood are now operative in the Mass, the sacrifice of the Church.

In expressing these difficulties I am afraid of having conveyed an impression that this book is less good than it is. The truth is that it is full of good things, and I cannot imagine anyone reading without benefiting by it spiritually and theologically. The difficulties

I have raised may have an easy solution; at any rate they are far outweighed by the vision of truth which is given to us.

M. C. D'ARCY, S.J.

*Francis Cardinal Bourne.* By Ernest Oldmeadow, K.C.S.G. Vol. II, Pp. 421. Illustrated. (Burns Oates. 18s.)

In a frank and disarming preface, Mr. Oldmeadow tells of the wartime disasters which held up the publication of this second volume for over a year, and also of the paucity of material he had to work from, owing to the fact that the Cardinal left few, or, indeed, no personal diaries or private letters. Over and above these drawbacks Mr. Oldmeadow was handicapped by his inability to obtain certain documents and by the conditions by which he was bound when he was detailed to write this book. It is not clear by whom these conditions were made, as in one place it is stated that they were imposed by Cardinal Hinsley himself and in another by the Executors of the late Cardinal Bourne.

Given all these difficulties, bombed workshops, disordered notes, and scarcity of personal matter, Mr. Oldmeadow is to be congratulated on his perseverance and his determination to fulfil his allotted task. Ten years, and such a decade as the past one has been, is not long enough for the maturing of judgement on the life and work of any man, especially that of a Cardinal Archbishop of the Catholic Church, whose influence must, perforce, take to itself some of that timelessness which the Church possesses in a changing world. It is too late for a mere journalistic appreciation (such as we often see) made immediately after the death of the subject and too soon for definitive judgement on the life and work of any man in a great public office. Mr. Oldmeadow remarks that few of the late Cardinal's contemporaries remain with us, which is true, but even if they were alive they would speak of him as they knew him, in his youth, or maturity, but would not be able definitely to "place" him in the illustrious line of the Archbishops of Westminster. It is too soon for this "placing" to be done and it is made the more difficult by the paucity of material on which the biographer could base his work.

For all this, it is evident that Francis Bourne was ever true to himself, humble, shy and undemonstrative, but, like many other shy men, at his best in an emergency when his orderly mind and great courage came to the fore. Many of the affairs which loom large in this volume have by now passed into that twilight which receives twenty-year-old public events and some have gone even into total oblivion. In some cases, such as the Congo agitation and the stalemate election, the Cardinal's part was rather the holding of a watching brief, than the playing of an active rôle. Indirectly that election

affected the status of the Catholic schools, or rather might have done so, and the Cardinal's watchful anxiety is recorded. The language question in Canada is dealt with very fully, but there is little stress on the bi-lingual power of the Cardinal, which so effectively was used there, to smooth over difficulties which arose. The unhappy incidents connected with the new Cardinal's return to England are touched on with much tact and reticence; had it been possible it would have been better to omit all reference to them as—obviously—the full story cannot yet be told. It should be noted, however, that the lifelong opposition to Cardinal Bourne did not always emanate from men "of the baser sort"; nor were his opponents always Irishmen.

There can be no doubt that the last and supplementary chapter of this volume is most interesting and valuable as, for the first time, it deals with the "Malines Conversations" from the Catholic standpoint. Much was heard of l'Abbé Portal years ago, before he was "silenced" by His Holiness Leo XIII, and by most people he had been forgotten, or at best remembered as just one more foreign priest, who thought that he knew more about England than, in fact, he did. It was a surprise, therefore, to find him, twenty-five years later, still actively in pursuit of his pet idea, this time in company with a small group of very "High" Anglicans, but it was still more surprising to find that these activities had been going on throughout the long years of "silence" imposed on M. Portal by the Holy See. During the war period 1914-1918, the great Cardinal Mercier had attained a world-wide reputation as a national hero, and to the average non-Catholic his was the best-known name in the College of Cardinals. The aged Viscount Halifax was also well known, both as a sportsman and as the leading layman in the extreme party of the Church of England. When the first news of the Malines Conversations leaked out it was found that they had taken place in the house of Cardinal Mercier himself, and under his presidency, a fact which gave to them, in the eyes of the average newspaper reader, an undue importance. Subsequent to the Conversations, many writings have been published by Anglicans and Frenchmen who favoured the Portalist ideas, but hitherto the English Catholic case has not been made available to the reading public.

In this well thought out and expressed summary of the whole incident, Mr. Oldmeadow has supplied a clear, objective and (so far) complete account of the strange doings at Malines, before and during the actual meetings and, most strange of all, in the years that followed. It is not pleasant reading. Most of the protagonists are dead; some of the Anglicans have left behind versions of the proceedings which are not entirely in accord (which was to be expected); and Mr. Oldmeadow has given us a carefully documented account of

it all. For the first time we have the Catholic side brought out in detail; Cardinal Bourne's letter to his Brother Cardinal of Malines, the conclusive letter of Cardinal Merry del Val, the details of Cardinal Mercier's curious reaction to Fr. Woodlock's sermon, the Beauduin interlude, the Abbé Calvet's disclaimer and the paper by the *Canonist*, etc., etc.

In spite of all the details, now for the first time published, it is still difficult to account for the attitude of Cardinal Mercier. From whom did he get his idea of the history of England, or of the position of the Catholic Church in this country? That Cardinal Mercier's notions about the Church of England were derived directly from his Anglican companions is, of course, evident; many other foreign priests have been equally misled; but where did he get his ideas about the Catholic Church in England? Surely there was some other, unnamed, influence at work. His Eminence's "not very happy" intervention in Irish affairs and his offer to Fr. George Tyrrell could hardly have sprung, either from the Abbé Portal or Lord Halifax, still less from Dr. Davidson! At this time the proposals, seriously considered at Malines, seem almost comic and the whole proceedings from first to last lack any semblance of reality. Cardinal van Roey, who attended all the meetings and who succeeded Cardinal Mercier as Archbishop of Malines, soon put a stop to the affair, which indicates that no dust was thrown into his eyes, either by M. Portal, Lord Halifax, or anybody else.

As a factual record this book is, and will remain, a very useful contribution to the history of the Catholic Church in this country, but only as a record. Of the personality of Cardinal Bourne, other than what can be deduced from his public utterances, there is little or nothing. The frequent repetition of the phrase "the Quiet Cardinal" does not give anything like a portrait of Francis Bourne, nor does it give any idea of his tireless devotion to the duties of his high office, his care for the routine details of his daily life, nor his affectionate fidelity to his friends. In a measure this is due to the relative absence of personal letters and diaries, but this painstaking and well-written book suffers from the fact that it, almost entirely, leaves out the man himself—Francis Cardinal Bourne.

*Canterbury Cathedral Priory: A Study in Monastic Administration.* By R. A. L. Smith, Ph.D. (Cambridge University Press. 15s.)

This is one of the "Cambridge Studies in Economic History" published under the general editorship of Professor M. M. Postan, and is most valuable as presenting a detailed history of the Priory's estates in Kent which is as readable as it is scholarly. In describing their organization and tracing their fortunes Dr. Smith gives the reader the living picture

of the mediaeval agricultural economy which it is so hard to form from the textbooks, to whose tendency to unjustified generalization and theoretical unreality such a picture is the necessary corrective. The author is careful, too, to indicate the features in his picture which are peculiar to monastic estates and, among these, to those of Christ Church. The central and manorial organization is described and its development carefully traced. The vital story of rents and labour services is told in detail and related to recent discussions on the subject, and Dr. Smith shows the first-class importance of hired labourers, *famuli*, a class of whom too little is usually heard in histories of the manor. The chapter on arable farming not only discusses the administrative topics of the monastic food farm system and marketing, but also such agricultural matters as the methods adopted to increase the yield by altering the intensity of sowing and improving the soil and the seed, notably during the great high-farming period of the priory under Henry of Eastry (1285-1331). Pasture farming is fully discussed in a chapter which provides useful evidence on matters of general historical interest, such as the effect on the wool-grower of the taxation of Edward III and of the quasi-monopoly of the Staplers. In a most interesting account of the "sustained and often remarkable" work of the monks in reclaiming marshes and resisting coastal inundations, Dr. Smith shows, against Miss Neilson's conclusions, that the thirteenth-century conversion of marsh customs into royal ordinances did not at all lead to the supersession of private initiative in such matters by royal organization and common action. This is one of many instances in which the book illustrates the admirable balance, the diversity in unity, of mediaeval English institutions.

The happy harmony between central authority and local liberty attained under the feudal system is well brought out in the chapter on the Liberty of Christ Church, in which the monks are shown carrying on the king's government in the area of their jurisdiction with the same sort of "skill and efficiency" as they displayed in the management of their estates. Indeed the book illustrates constitutional history only less fully than economic, and throws some illuminating sidelights also on legal history. In describing the central administrative organization of the Priory, Dr. Smith makes informative comparisons between the Priory exchequer and chancery and those of the kingdom. The chapter on the Prior's council, in detailing the interesting history of this vital instrument of a mediaeval ecclesiastical magnate, gives a number of glimpses of the practical workings of the courts of law, since judges, civil and canon lawyers and, later, attorneys in the royal courts were retained as members of the council to give advice and to watch over the multifarious interests of the Priory. It is useful, too, to be given the details of the "evasion" of the statute of mortmain by the Priory, though perhaps the word is not altogether accurate;

it would appear that the system of licences which was adopted did not frustrate the real purpose of the statute, which was not seemingly to prevent religious from acquiring land so much as to ensure that the crown was not deprived of its rights by such acquisition (cf the 14th clause of the 1259 Provisions of Westminster cited in the preamble of the statute).

The last decade of the fourteenth century saw the opening of a new era in the economy of the Priory, both at the centre and on the manors. At the centre it is the age of the great priors, who appropriated many of the functions of the treasurers of the previous period and personally controlled the finances of the house. It is to them that we owe the great glories of the Cathedral, Chillenden's nave and the Angel Tower. On the manors, too, it may appear as the age of fruition, for, with the development of an almost completely leasehold system, the serjeant, a paid manager under the tutelage of the monastic wardens, gives way to the "farmer", and the monks become landlords, "*rentiers living on an expanding rent roll*" as Dr. Smith has it, landlords, apparently, of an exemplary type, continuing the beneficent work of the previous period for the welfare of their land, and surpassing it in such an operation as the complete draining of Appledore Marsh.

As regards monastic history in the narrower sense (it is one of the virtues of Dr. Smith's treatment that it transcends these rather arid categories, used here only to facilitate summary comment) the book throws light on the development of the modern constitutional rights of Chapters and on the position of the mediaeval obedientiaries. The peculiarities of the English cathedral priory are, of course, fully illustrated. In this connexion, Dr. Smith's treatment of the relations of the archbishops with the monks would have faiged had he made a comparison with the relation between other abbots of the period and with their communities. Mediaeval England saw the fullest development of the separate abbatial household, already envisaged in a rudimentary form by St. Benedict, so that the position of the archbishop-abbot did not differ so widely, to take a ready instance, from that of Samson of Bury as a reader unacquainted with Jocelin might suppose. Certain critical comments on monastic matters may be regretted; the appearance of "*camerae*" should be treated by the historian in relation to the modern system in which each monk has his room and the officials their offices, and not, as by certain mediaeval reformers, merely as a breach of common life. The comments on the monastic diet, the paucity of monastic monetary almsgiving, holidays for monks (which have scarcely any relation to the question of monastic stability) might all be criticized, but there that is no longer the hope of discussing them with the author. Dr. Smith appears to have had little sympathy with the economic or administrative developments of "the last 150 years", and perhaps, too, viewed the period too much

in the light of its tragic end, so that the final chapter is less completely satisfying than the main part of the book. The fact of a certain relaxation should not be exaggerated in considering the last period of the old monasteries of England, lest we should minimize the crime and disaster of the suppression. We know what happened in 1540, but we should not be blind to what might have happened had not the "Reformation" destroyed the period's happy promise of spiritual revival.

By the excellence of this study, a most valuable contribution to mediaeval history, we can measure something of the loss Catholic scholarship has suffered in Dr. Smith's untimely death.

THEODORE RICHARDSON, O.S.B.

*The Beginning of Goodness.* By Columba Cary-Elwes, Monk of Ampleforth. (Burns Oates and Washbourne Ltd. Price 3s. 6d.)

MANY books have been written to help the laity to love and serve God in a world in which they have to be busy about many other things as well. Very few, however, have been written to meet the special needs of the young Catholic man or woman who is facing the world for the first time, or who, having recently taken the plunge, is already floundering about, more or less helplessly, in the water. We are glad, therefore, to welcome a book which is designed, in the first instance, to introduce to the world the young educated Catholic of about seventeen to twenty years of age. The young Catholic who has just left his Catholic school, and, in wartime, his Catholic home, must find the spiritual bleakness of the world rather disconcerting. Up till now he has been living in a little Catholic world. Life in that world was a religious life; it had purpose and meaning, and all the means of living it religiously were at hand in abundance: daily Mass, community prayer, the guidance of the commandments and the help of the sacraments. Parents, teachers, friends and associates all shared equally in this life, contributed a great deal to it, and helped to make it. Religious teaching had a place in it, but religious living was the whole of it. The new life in the greater world to which time and the war brings him is not at all arranged in the same way. The more intensely Catholic his school and home training has been, the greater is the change and the more difficult the adjustment. His new friends and associates cannot enter into his religious life. Any common purpose or meaning this new world can provide must be based on a common interest in immediate and secondary matters. Indeed, it will tend to confine itself to the satisfaction of animal interests, and talk will only too frequently reflect this exclusive preoccupation. Yet the young Catholic has to live and work with these people; he (or she) must fit in and is naturally anxious to do so. But how far can he

go with people who are going nowhere in particular and are therefore liable to land anywhere? At any rate, he must never lose his own sense of direction, especially since the familiar signposts of his school and home-life days have been removed, and his lines of communication, Mass and the sacraments, have under wartime conditions been restricted and possibly severed altogether. Frontal attacks on his Catholic life are not to be feared so much, perhaps, as the peaceful penetration of his defences. He has doubtlessly been well warned and forearmed against the obvious dangers, but he may easily be put off his guard when he comes into contact with the sheer human decency and the mere human goodness, the kindness, the courage and the delightful modesty which are so often found in people with no time for religion and little regard for some of the commandments. The habit of wholehearted conformity which was one of the great satisfactions of school and home life may make it easy for him to wish to be accepted as normal and he may end up by being no more than a good pagan himself.

To avoid this the young Catholic must use whatever means of sanctification are at hand, "the inactive Catholic is lost". But defence and self-protection are not enough. Unless we can inspire him with the idea that his spiritual existence depends upon attack and then more attack, the battle is already lost. Unless he can bring his spiritual life to bear upon the world in which he lives, that world will soon eat into the life of his soul, making it a reflection of itself, "a waste land of shaken beliefs and shattered standards". One thing is certain, the interior life cannot be sealed off from the outward life which is its expression. From the very beginning, therefore, the young Catholic in the world must push out a spiritual bridgehead into the world around him, and from this point his spiritual life must fan outwards. He who regards his spiritual life as a private concern of his own, something merely to be defended and preserved, will not preserve it for long. The spiritual life is the one thing that we can share with others without losing any of it; the more we share it with others, the more there is for ourselves. If it is not shared, it will decrease. It is impossible to be successfully concerned with relations between God and ourselves, without being deeply concerned about relations between God and our neighbour. Therefore the author of this little book wisely insists that the apostolate of the laity is necessary, not only for the sanctification of their neighbour, but also for their own. This is the "tremendous responsibility and the tremendous opportunity" of the layman in the modern world. Those who serve God in the cloister are not allowed to neglect their neighbour's soul; the man in the world who wishes to love and serve God cannot neglect it either. "Many young men and women," says the author, "desire, not merely to avoid sin, but to gain perfection; and they

intend to seek it in the world and not in the cloister. The Holy Spirit seems to be stirring the laity as never before, and leading them the way to holiness. Men are wanting to do, not merely the minimum, but the maximum. In this enterprise, as in most, guidance is needed." He hopes that his little book will be what he modestly describes as a small contribution to this task of guidance. In spite of its size, the book manages to cover almost the whole ground of the Christian life. The traditional teaching of the Church, and the experience of hundreds of years of the spiritual life, is here summed up, refreshingly applied to modern conditions in the world and re-stated in very modern language. The author has a gift for expressing himself with lucidity in a simple straightforward way, with a wealth of homely but striking illustrations. His aim is not to give information, but to deepen understanding of the key-points of the spiritual life. In the preface, Fr. Paul Nevill describes the author as "an experienced mentor and guide of the young, who knows what is he talking about when he speaks of the ways of the world as well as when he speaks of the spiritual life". Every word of the book endorses this judgement. The book can be highly recommended, not only to those for whom it was written, but to anyone who is struggling to lead a truly Catholic and spiritual life in the world. Parents, priests and teachers will find it particularly useful and stimulating.

ARCHBISHOP OF ST. ANDREWS AND EDINBURGH.

*Catholic Thought and Modern Psychology.* By W. P. Wittcutt. (Burns Oates. 4s. 6d.)

UNDER a hideous wrapper there appears a slim volume in pleasant red with this resounding title; an essay of fifty odd pages should never have been asked to bear the enormous implications suggested by the two terms of its subject. Jungian psychology in the light of Catholic philosophy would more aptly, though hardly less modestly, describe its scope.

Jung somewhere remarked that the Jesuits had studied his work long before the Protestants; one hears that the Dominicans are very interested, and from internal evidence, one would judge that the author of this study extends the approbation of a Secular.

If we criticize Fr. Wittcutt it is because he has treated a great subject with too much levity as well as brevity. To deal with Freud in six pages and Adler in two, is hardly fair to either, especially as the outline of Freudian theory is sprinkled with inaccuracies; e.g. it is not correct to equate the Freudian Ego with Consciousness. But criticism of this part of the essay need not concern itself with details, when it is seen that the whole basis of his critique of the Freudian approach is so weak; the author, being perhaps an intuitive introvert

type, dislikes Freud, who is the opposite, and dubs him a heretic of the "materialistic hedonist" variety, whereas Jung, he implies, can be accepted amid our ranks in so far as he will not clash badly with the Thomist approach. Now the question of heresy need not be dragged in at all, if we take Freudian theory at its face value: as medical psychology. All its main concepts: conflict, repression, unconscious significance of dreams, etc., are hypotheses whose extreme value can be verified by the taste-test of observation and therapy. Dalbiez in his important book has shown this in convincing manner, and has clearly delimited the "theory" from the "doctrine". In any case Freudianism has moved far beyond the concept of the "pleasure principle", which the author makes so much of. Freud's philosophy is wrong, but that does not mean that he is wrong *qua empirical psychologist*.

Now Jung, while apparently accepting the value of religion, the soul, immortality, etc., as not mere neurotic flights from reality, is very careful to avoid the "nothing but" attitude of Freud, and to keep their consideration on the plane of psychology, leaving the question of their "reality" or objectivity an open question. He deals with these matters as symbols and values which are facts of observation in the human psyche, and he is perfectly right. Actually, if judged at the bar of Catholic philosophy, as Fr. Wittcutt judges Freud, he might be found guilty of the heresy of complete subjectivism, because these values and symbols arise for him, as psychologist, from the depths of the collective unconscious which is in our own minds; in fact he is a kind of Pelagian!

The author makes a daring claim for Jung when he says that by his discovery of the archetypes as inherited traces in the brain, which enable the intellect to abstract from data that were not previously presented to the senses, he is enlarging, or at least adding a corollary to, the Thomistic view. But it is difficult to see why the "collective unconscious" should be held to correspond to the *intellectus agens*, which is not, surely, a "supreme intellect"?

What Jung in fact does appear to have done, and to be doing, is to enlarge and complement that profound and subtle elucidation of natural man which was initiated by Freud.

Leaving aside these controversial issues, we can compliment the author on his final chapter, in which are briefly described twelve archetypes or symbols of the collective and personal unconscious, with intriguing additions from the author's own store of English examples: Puck and Looby, the Mermaid of the Black Mere, Peg Powler of the Tees. They are a refreshing change from the Nibelung, Tammuz, Balder, and the usual cosmopolitan crowd. Had the whole essay in fact been devoted to this aspect it might have had considerable value.

CHARLES BURNS.

*Carmelite and Poet: St. John of the Cross.* By Robert Sencourt. (Hollis & Carter. 15s.)

OF late years there has been an extraordinary growth of interest in St. John of the Cross, here in England no less than on the Continent. Mr. Sencourt has now given us a "framed portrait" of the saint, a study which "seeks to show how his work and his life are one, and frames him in his time and his Spain"; but although the frame has been constructed with great skill the portrait itself is misleading, as is the reproduction from El Greco's painting of the "Burial of the Conde de Orgaz" which adorns the dust-cover of this book.

Mr. Sencourt has portrayed St. John as a Carmelite and as a poet, with especial emphasis on the latter. The weakness of this interpretation becomes evident, however, when it is carried to the point of confusing a feeling of exaltation induced by a poetic appreciation of the beauties of nature with the grace of infused contemplation (chapter 20, first part), and identifying the Prayer of Quiet with a state of nervous exhaustion (p. 130). Mr Sencourt maintains that it was to explain this type of prayer that the *Ascent* was written; St. John has stated his real purpose with great precision in the opening sentence of chapter 28, Bk. II, of this work. St. John was indeed a great poet, but he was also, as Prof. Peers so rightly stresses, a philosopher, psychologist, mystic, a theologian with a genius for spiritual direction, a gifted prose-writer, and, above all, a great saint. Nor is his sanctity a secondary issue. The whole course of his life—especially the incredible austerity of those early days at Duruelo, his famous request that he might suffer and be despised (not mentioned in Mr. Sencourt's book), his heroic choice to die at Ubeda—as well as the doctrines he expounded in his four great commentaries can only be truly appreciated as the life and writings of a saint, who taught souls to fulfil the first commandment in all its fullness and to be stripped even of their "very skin and all else for Christ".

The book is very readable and the illustrations are chosen with taste, but there are, unfortunately, inaccuracies, of which the following are examples: (1) p. 22. It is not only "to those that receive them" that the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ in the Mass. (2) p. 46. Mr. Sencourt quotes St. John's words, "a heart of one that had fallen in love," as if they had been written to describe St. John's first meeting with St. Teresa, whereas the saint wrote them when expounding the ninth stanza of the *Spiritual Canticle*, concerning the soul's love for God. (3) p. 53. Mariano's "Andalusian companion", Juan de la Miseria, was not Andalusian but Italian. (4) p. 90. The two months which St. John spent in Toledo after his escape were not spent with the nuns but at the Santa Cruz hospital under the protection of Don Pedro Gonzales de Mendoza. (5) p. 201. St. John "refers only once to the Blessed Virgin, and then

as an example of wisdom". There is only one reference to Our Lady in the *Ascent*, but *not* as an example of wisdom (*Ascent*, Bk. III, 11, 10); this is not, as Mr. Sencourt suggests, the only reference in all the prose works. The fact that Mr. Sencourt praises Mrs. Cunningham Graham's *Santa Teresa* should in itself prove a warning to Catholic readers.

To stress that the saint's "passions were poetry and nature" and to confuse his life and teaching with Protestantism further weakens a book which is written with genuine enthusiasm.

M. M. GRACE.

*Man and Literature.* By Norman Nicholson. (S.C.M. Press. 10s. 6d.)

THERE is nothing original in Norman Nicholson's critical ideas. They are those of the more lasting, but less readable, Faber books of criticism; of the philosopher T. E. Hulme; of Michael Roberts' *The Recovery of the West*; and in particular of the critical essays of T. S. Eliot, especially *After Strange Gods*. But he has applied these standards with considerable insight, not to say ingenuity, if also with occasional errors—his reading of the last chapter of Kafka's *Trial* as a happy ending, for example, is pure wishful thinking.

The importance of what men believe is that, for them, whether for individuals or for whole nations and generations, the world is as if their belief were true (which is a grave consideration to be borne in mind when choosing a cosmography). To some extent we choose our beliefs, but in doing so we are dependent on history and on society—and if history and society take a wrong course, it is for writers of genius (those unacknowledged legislators), among others, to find the way out. To contend with the real problems of any time is a task for giants. It is not enough to be right, like Belloc and Chesterton, within narrow limits. A great writer must also undertake much. St. Teresa might have been thinking expressly of poets when she wrote that "God loves courageous souls"—like Dostoievski, Balzac, Dante and Shakespeare. But not all those who contend with the great issues of history—one thinks of Hardy or Lawrence—reach a complete solution. Their failures may, nevertheless, be more valuable than the orthodoxy of smaller men. It is so much easier to be merely right than to be great, honest, or full of love. A poet has to be true to so much—true to history, true to the human evidence as he finds it. History sets the problem. Honesty in performing the task assigned is harder to lay a finger on than orthodoxy. Norman Nicholson occasionally allows his enthusiasm for tidiness to blind him to this truth.

With T. S. Eliot's theories, Mr. Nicholson also takes over some of his blind spots, as when he dismisses Hardy very

lightly. Quite obviously Hardy never saw beyond a blind, yet curiously purposeful Fate that he supposed, on the evidence as his time and place in history gave it to him, to rule human destiny. But even in this failure, what a great poet he was, and how true to history, to his country and its people, and—not least—its Church! If Norman Nicholson is looking for real Anglicanism, as historically it had become at the end of the nineteenth century, in Hardy he has it. Not in T. S. Eliot or Anne Ridler or George Every. Whatever that Anglicanism may be, it is not the Church of England as it has stood and crumbled with its crusaders' tombs and restored gothic, its beauty and its curious emptiness, and final agnosticism; where in the heart of English villages, faith faded into the nostalgic regret of Hardy's minstrels, and village tombstones, and the kneeling oxen of his Christmas night. Perhaps this is the secret of T. S. Eliot's dislike of Hardy—the thing itself, the real traditionalist and the real Anglican. But whatever Eliot wrote of Hardy, he assumed his importance, and did not, as Norman Nicholson does, make his heresy a pretext for underrating him.

Norman Nicholson is at his best with the section on Liberal Man—where he writes of Shaw, Arnold Bennett, Wells, Galsworthy and the realist dramatists (with the exception of Charles Morgan, whose predilection for adultery places him with the believers in Natural Man). It is with these Pelagians (as he calls them) that his good sense, zest, and wit are at their best, and one likes his summing up of Shaw, as having within him always a potential General of the Salvation Army, "who beats his drum at the most unexpected moments, who made hay of Shaw's arguments, but gave vitality to his plays."

He is best, too, when he forgets his standards, and allows his enjoyment full play. The Christian yardstick is liable to come into play when the author finds himself becoming too enthusiastic, as, for example, over Mr. Polly and the Potwell Inn, when he pulls himself up by saying rather sententiously, "Though Wells drops his preaching during much of it, his limited conception of Man prevents Mr. Polly from coming out in the round, as it were—he stays a caricature in two dimensions, though a very lively one. Beside *The Rainbow*, *Portrait of an Artist*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, or *Light in August*, *The History of Mr. Polly* looks slight and even trivial." Then, realizing that this is somehow not true, Norman Nicholson contradicts himself quickly, and adds, "But I think it may have in it more than they have of the stuff which endures."

"The stuff which endures". It always comes back to that. For there are writers in all his three categories who have in them "the stuff which endures", and also in all three writers who have not. It is of no manner of use for Norman Nicholson to write, as he does

of Joyce's *Ulysses*, "A similar attempt to weld the diversity of modern life into a whole was made in *The Waste Land*. Eliot's attempt was more successful, partly because it was more concise, but partly also because he was already moving towards the complete acceptance of the Christian doctrines which were implicit in his thought." To begin with the statement is more than questionable. With the greatest admiration for the greatest living English—and probably European—and certainly American—poet, I for one judge *Ulysses* to be a greater work than *The Waste Land*, if only because while *The Waste Land* is largely, though certainly not entirely, a work of the intellect, *Ulysses* is the work of the whole man—body and heart as well as mind; and because while *Ulysses* is full of warm humanity and love, and *The Waste Land* is full only of frustrated love. But even if it were true, the reason given would be the wrong one. Complete acceptance of Christian doctrines does not help a poet to that extent. St. Thérèse of Lisieux was a saint. But would Norman Nicholson say that she wrote poetry—though she did write verse—that is better than, or as good as, that of Eliot or Joyce? Of course he would not, and neither would any critic in his senses. But that is where the argument leads.

T. S. Eliot (in *After Strange Gods*) describes the author of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* as "a very sick man indeed". Norman Nicholson follows him in this, but Eliot also wrote, "Lawrence lived all his life, I should imagine, on a spiritual level; no man was ever less a sensualist. Against the living death of modern civilization he spoke again and again, and even if these dead could speak, what he said is unanswerable." But Norman Nicholson treats what he calls Lawrence's "blood and soil mysticism" as a huge joke, which it most certainly is not.

This is not to say that there is not a magnificent tradition of Christian thought in modern literature—though Norman Nicholson might have been more adventurous in discovering it—not that of Faber Anglicanism, but, above all, in France and in Russia, where the nineteenth century laid foundations far more solid than any Christian scaffolding that remains or has been reconstructed in England today. Balzac and Baudelaire; Tolstoy and Dostoievski. But Norman Nicholson's Christianity is of a much cosier kind than those giants dug out like precious metal from the dark seams of the sinful world. Christianity, if it is a force at all, is a much more potent one than Norman Nicholson appears yet to have grasped. Attempts to pick the leaven out of the lump are not ever very satisfactory—Balzac and Dostoievski both saw that, and so must any writer capable of recognizing the spirit when he encounters it.

Norman Nicholson is at his best with the pure wits, like Shaw. Forster he classes, very inadequately, as a satirist; *Ulysses* he takes to be a great comic book—and his comparison of Bloom and

Mr. Polly is, so far as it goes, pleasing. But how much more! Joyce, if anyone, could penetrate always to the tears in things. There is that compassion in Hardy, too, who loved not only humanity in human beings; and in Arnold Bennet.

There are striking omissions, too, in view of some of the names included—Henry James, and Proust, for example. (Why, indeed, should de Montherlant, of all third-rate writers, be the only representative of French novelists?) Virginia Woolf is too briefly dismissed. The chapters on Eliot to the Younger Poets add little to the already considerable literature on this subject.

But, taken all in all, Norman Nicholson has read intelligently and, above all, with real pleasure. And his standards, after all, are those that the common reader, at any rate, ought to bear in mind when he reads. Moral judgements should not be excluded from literature. But the danger of substituting a mechanical for a vital judgement is always dangerously near to hand. We must be on our guard against too violent a swing over in the direction of applying rigidly moral standards at the expense of the vital complexity of the truth for which poets must always seek. Norman Nicholson, himself a poet, is in no danger of doing this. But some of his readers will need to remind themselves from time to time that “the spirit bloweth where it listeth”.

KATHLEEN RAINÉ.

*A Man Without a Mask.* By J. Bronowski. (Seuer & Warburg. 8s. 6d.)

THIS essay of 140 pages is a piece of serious work worth careful reading, in spite of its unattractive English style. It raises, moreover, a subject of the greatest interest—and one very much to the point at this time when it is becoming clear—most of all, apparently, in Russia, where it has been tried—that dialectical materialism, as a religion to live by, does not solve all the human problems of the working classes. It is well to be reminded, in this context, that the industrial revolution in nineteenth-century England has been the proper study not only of economists and politicians, but of at least one Christian mystic: William Blake.

Mr. Bronowski, while not in the narrowest sense a Marxist, assumes dialectical materialism as a standard of reference. For an essay on Blake, poet though he was of the “Satanic Mills”, he could scarcely have chosen a worse. The result is *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark—or should one say the *Divina Comedia* without God? Mr. Bronowski may consider the Marxists right and Blake wrong, but he cannot persuade us that Blake was ever a materialist. Had he tried to persuade Blake, it is not hard to imagine some of the burning

invective that poet would have hurled at him. Blake said what he thought about materialism clearly enough and often enough:

A fourfold vision do I see,  
A fourfold vision is given to me.  
'Tis Fourfold in my supreme delight,  
And Threefold in soft Beulah's night,  
And Twofold always. God us keep  
From Single vision and Newton's sleep.

But to those with the "single vision" only, the other states of living must ever seem like figures of rhetoric, which for Blake, as for other mystics, they are most emphatically not. Yet Mr. Bronowski does not treat Blake's visionary writings as insane. Partly he relies on the vagueness of the word "poetry" to obscure the clarity of the mystical truth that Blake had ever before him. For the rest—this is the central argument of his essay—he elaborates a theory that the Prophetic Books were deliberately written in an obscure style because Blake dared not say what he *really meant*, for political reasons.

Few will accept this theory. Blake owed little allegiance to the princes of this world and was never one to hold his peace for reasons of policy. His outspokenness was again and again his undoing, in a worldly sense. Nor was he, as Mr. Bronowski would have us think, "cowed" by his poverty—any more than St. Francis was. If he had played his cards for money, he could have had money, but he chose other things, that he valued more highly. There is a frightening literalness about some Christian truths, and those concerning the holiness of poverty, Blake proved in his life, as the saints had proved before him. The books that he could not get published on earth were, he used to say, beautifully bound in heaven. The man who died singing songs to the God he had praised in all his songs, was not "cowed". He was triumphant. Nor does Blake's fierce and uncompromising and often summary treatment of those, whether influential or otherwise, with whose opinions he disagreed (Reynolds, for instance, or Hayley) give countenance to Mr. Bronowski's theory that he deliberately concealed the inopportune. It would seem rather to be because Blake did say what he meant, that he is so profoundly obscure to those who would wish him to have said something else.

It has come to be taken for granted that the problems of the lives of what Marxists call the proletariat can best be discussed in terms of economics and political science. The question is no longer whether satanic mills are desirable, but simply who is to own them. This is probably the greatest injustice of all those under which the working classes have suffered in this century. But for Blake—as for the Wesleys, who immediately preceded him—this was not the point. What preoccupied those who watched the first effects of taking men

from the land and putting them to work at machines, in conditions that made poverty something worse than the poverty of serfs, was primarily the problem of man's spiritual welfare, and of his material welfare as a necessary part of that larger issue. For "that call'd Body is a portion of Soul discern'd by the five Senses, the chief inlets of Soul in this age". And again, "some say that Happiness is not good for Mortals, and they ought to be answered that sorrow is not good for Immortals".

Mr. Bronowski reminds us that Karl Marx "shook" with pity, anger, grief and horror at a society in which men who work go poor, even as he wrote his great indictment of the Capitalist system. And well he might, even on the evidence of a "single vision and Newton's sleep". But with how much more reason do saint and the mystic indict those Councillors who throw

The curb of poverty on the laborious,  
 To fix the price of labour,  
 To invent allegoric riches?  
 And the privy admonishers of men  
 Call for fires in the City,  
 For heaps of smoking ruins  
 In the night of prosperity and wantonness?  
 To turn man from his path,  
 To restrain the child from the womb,  
 To cut off the bread from the city,  
 That the remnant may learn to obey,  
 That the pride of the heart may fail,  
 That the lust of the eyes may be quench'd,  
 That the delicate ear in its infancy  
 May be dull'd, and the nostrils clos'd up . . .

For Blake it was the "inlets of the soul" that were closed up by poverty and want, not merely the animal senses.

That the prophetic books are obscure no one will deny. But if not of deliberate political intention, then why? Is it because Blake, one of the few genuine mystics in modern times, was, in the kind of Christianity that he knew best, never provided with the key or the framework that, as a mystic of rare purity and depth of vision, he required? He was self-educated, and a Protestant—which is much the same thing, in religious matters. Whereas St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa (whom Blake constantly read) and other Catholic mystics were compelled to refer their personal experience continually to the framework of Catholicism, Blake was alone with the angels. At times he spoke of them with the exquisite clarity of the *Songs*, but often he was wandering among nameless and shapeless visions, in a private world; the wilderness of heaven, one might say. Compared with the great Hindu or Catholic religious writings, the Prophetic Books are, as Swinburne said, "wind

and splutter". But no one who has ventured alone in those uncharted regions will require Mr. Bronowski's explanation of their obscurity.

It is remarkable that, so far as their territories coincide, the Marxist and the mystic think alike about the social wrongs of the industrial revolution. The mystic is ever a realist—and Blake was a fourfold realist—and the materialist is sometimes the best judge of the mystic's insight into worldly matters. Mr. Bronowski's homage is one not to be despised. Nor would it be fair to imply that Mr. Bronowski, who has himself ventured into poetry, sees nothing more in Blake than a pamphleteer manqué.

KATHLEEN RAINÉ.

*The Great Hunger.* By Patrick Kavanagh. (Cuala Press, Dublin.)

THIS is the most considerable poem to come out of Ireland since the death of Yeats; indeed, I have read nothing to equal it in English verse since the war, unless it be the recent poems of Mr. Eliot. English poetry is suffocated for lack of a tradition. Each poet has to find not only his style, but his appropriate range of reference. This tends to be stale or esoteric, as the case may be. But Mr. Kavanagh is writing in the full cultural tradition of his country, and the more primitive layers of that tradition are in themselves the subject of his verse. His theme is ready-made, like all the great themes. His melody is all of his own making.

*The Great Hunger* is a strange and disquieting poem. But for the splendour of its diction, it would be a depressing poem also. The "hunger" is the unappeased, unsublimated hunger of the flesh. This does not make for exaltation in the verse that chronicles it, but only the grossest Puritanism would condemn it as a theme for poetry. The hunger realized in all its power and pathos by Mr. Kavanagh is a collective as well as an individual desire. There are many peasants who speak in the name of Old Maguire.

Maguire was faithful to death.  
He stayed with his mother till she died,  
At the age of ninety-one.  
She stayed too long,  
Wife and mother in one.  
When she died  
The knuckle-bones were cutting the skin of her  
son's backside  
And he was sixty-five.

That is what the poem is about:

O the grip, o the grip of irregular fields! No man escapes.

The tyranny of the soil over the peasant, sucking his sentient humanity back into the anonymity of Nature, reducing him to little more than the roots to which he will return.

Mr. Kavanagh has reacted, as he is perfectly entitled to react, against the romanticism which has exalted the peasant beyond the reality of his vocation. His poem is not in the least controversial, though sentimental sociologists may controvert it. It merely states the price that a way of life may have to pay for its simplicity. It merely reminds us that a man may be obliterated by the mud as well as by the machine. And its conclusion suggests that in Ireland the price is paid too often.

The hungry fiend  
Screams the apocalypse of clay  
In every corner of this land.

It is not possible, in a short review, to illustrate the skill with which Mr. Kavanagh has managed his metre. The assonances; the repetitions; the irregular rhymes; the occasional formal stanzas varying the intricate, terse style—these are achievements of a high technical order and secure the poem on the level of its fine imagining. Mr. Kavanagh has also succeeded in marrying, for this once, at any rate, the poetic and the realistic trends in the Irish literary Renaissance. Yeats, for all his devotion to blood and soil, was ever the Romantic. He did not belong to this plain earth of Monaghan, as Mr. Kavanagh belongs to it. But in *The Great Hunger* the bucolic background to a score of Abbey Theatre comedies has been lit with the poet's passionate observation. It has sometimes been objected that Catholic and Gaelic Ireland has contributed little, except realism, to Irish literature. There is realism here—painful and disturbing, even, at times—but there is also the awareness of universal things. An entire human situation is lit up in poor Maguire, stranded between the implacable earth and the immense hinterland of God. Thus seen, his sterility is assuaged by a divine pity. Mr. Kavanagh has conceded nothing to sentiment or pietism; he has been true to the imagination. Of what use is the Faith to an artist if it does not permit him to speak the truth?

*The Great Hunger* is magnificently produced in this limited edition by the Cuala Press.

ROBERT SPEAGHT.

*Cain*. A play in two acts. By Anne Ridler. (P. L. Nicholson and Watson, London. 4s. 6d.)

MRS. RIDLER has won for herself an assured place among the English poets of our time. As yet she has risen to no great stature, but she

is young and will probably reach her maturity by gradual steps. For she has a gift rare among the young poets, the gift of repose. She writes out of an inner peace, that lies deeper than all the struggles of life. So far, her domestic poetry is her most notable: she tells of the things that she had heard and known. But there is in her account of them an underlying gravity that suggests larger subjects to come.

*Cain* is an earlier writing than her last collection of lyrics, *The Nine Bright Shiners...* It is, so far as I know, her first play. She attempts in it to scale heights which she attains only momently: but the attempt is full of promise and well worth reading. The story of Cain's murder is told in two acts, each of three scenes, with the four members of the Adam family and two archangels for characters, and the place outside Eden-gate.

The play, though short, seems thin. A dramatist dealing with primitive folk-tale must always contend with the difficulty that the amount of action, though violent, is small. He cannot fill it out with the type of realistic detail which enriches a modern murder-thriller: he cannot enlarge upon the minor incidents of his characters' lives, or detail their domestic habits: he has no policemen or detectives to help him build up his case. In place of all these stand religion and philosophy: Cain's murder is significant for us all, whereas Crippen's is not. But unless this significance in thought can be derived from enough of action to justify the name of Drama, the play will be thin and the story overweighted by its meaning.

Mrs. Ridler, at her first attempt, has not mastered this problem. Her first two scenes are mere exposition: we meet the characters and learn from the archangels how God sees man, from the humans how man sees his own fall. At the end of Part I she invents an enlivening moment of action: Cain gives Abel a scare to test him:

I had to know  
Whether anything could come between your God and you.

But she ends the scene upon it so quickly that it has not time to take effect. Part II begins with the sacrifices: this formal scene is endued with a cool, early-morning radiance which smoulders and bursts into flame at the end: and the murder in the following scene is really exciting, done by means of an old game played by the brothers. After this the play falls back again into inaction: Adam and Eve are almost instantly reconciled to Abel's death, and Cain accepts his banishment with little struggle. One feels a doubt about the virility of this new human race. Could the welter of lusts and aspirations, discoveries, endurance, crimes and triumphs which make up human history have issued from these half-formed loins?

The picture is, in fact, flat. But flat not like the doll in the child's rag-book: rather, like the child's own figure which promises the

contours of maturity. The character of Cain, the young man at odds with the world, comes at moments to a full life. The speech in which, like Macbeth, he wrestles with the temptation to murder, has an awakening magnificence:

He did not wish for my worship or my service:  
From my very birth He has banished me from Him.  
Yet for what reason? I could give Him a reason.  
If He has raised my brother for his delicate charms,  
Fine hair, soft words, to make a rabbit-skin saint,  
A silken satellite, and to gloat over his mildness,  
And if I removed him, I should commit a crime;  
Thus I should swallow up the apple of His eye,  
A more precious apple than was stolen in Eden;  
I should fit a cause to His bewildering coldness. . . .

This promises well: better and more important is the statement of the nature of sin. The meaning of the Fall is the play's real theme. When Mrs. Ridler knows how to dramatize fully she may become one of our foremost Christian playwrights. Here, as earnest of that hope, is the paradox of redemption stated with power:

**CAIN:**

O if I must carry not only the result  
But the cause of my sin, which I saw unseeing,  
Knew but refused knowing, shall I earn forgetfulness,  
Benevolence ever? after blood and sickness  
A life long, sleep again in the Sunday of love?  
Or must I die damned on another man's knife?

**MICHAEL:**

No hope is greater than yours: look and take comfort.  
Over the sharp edges of frustration and pain  
You are torn towards God; the mark of your misery  
Is the furrow of His glory engraved in your forehead.

E. MARTIN BROWNE.

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